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A CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR OLD TESTAMENT
STUDIES AT THE SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL

Prepared for the Tenth Grade at
Saint Anne's School

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Mary-Virginia Shaw

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INTRODUCTION

This curriculum guide has been prepared for the use of the tenth grade class in Old Testament studies at Saint Anne's School, Arlington Heights, Massachusetts during the school year, 1966-67. The School is conducted by the sisters of the Order of Saint Anne, and is an independent Episcopal girls' school, admitting grades seven to twelve. The academic faculty is comprised of resident sisters of the Order and a small lay faculty. The administrative faculty includes the Headmaster, an ordained priest of the Episcopal Church, an Assistant Headmistress, secretaries, and a Dean of Students who also serves as director of the Department of Sacred Studies.

The student body is relatively small -- 80 in number -- and is primarily residential, although approximately 10% of each class are day students. In spite of its size, the student population shows a wide range of geographic and cultural backgrounds. While nearly half of the girls come from Massachusetts, there are a few foreign countries represented each year. The majority of girls are raised as Episcopalians, and yet most all other Christian denominations are represented. The students are usually recommended to Saint Anne's "by a school principal who is familiar with the school, by some educational guidance or placement agency, by church officials, or an alumna or parent."¹

The School offers two curricula: college preparation and

¹Catalogue, St. Anne's School, Arlington Heights, Massachusetts, p. 12.

general. While there is a division between these two curricula in certain academic areas at the upper grade levels, the students in the tenth grade Sacred Studies are a heterogeneous group. This does present certain overt problems in curriculum planning, e.g., that of challenging the brighter students while still holding the attention of the entire class. But the diversity of academic backgrounds allows for variety in discussions.

Saint Anne's School requires Sacred Studies at all grade levels. The primary goals of the Department of Sacred Studies are:

- "1. to enable each student to have a basic knowledge of the roots and content of the Christian Faith.
2. to help each student understand, in contemporary terms, what it really means to be a Christian in the latter half of the twentieth century.
3. to provide each student with the opportunity and encouragement to discover for herself the bases on which she will build her own faith."²

In the ninth grade the student is directed toward a study of the meaning of the Christian community, its faith, worship and ethics. This course is taught by the Director of the Department of Sacred Studies and Dean of Women, Miss Elizabeth W. Myers, a graduate of the Episcopal Theological School. Miss Myers also teaches New Testament studies to grade eleven, and the senior class in contemporary life and thought both within and without the Church.

Grade ten studies the Old Testament from the point of view

²Myers, Elizabeth W., Sacred Studies Perspectives.

of history and theology. It is the chief concern of the author that Israel's story, as recorded in the Old Testament, be read and studied as the history of a people who lived at a certain time and place, and who were influenced by the culture and the events of the world in which they lived. This perspective on Old Testament studies presupposes two things: 1) an intelligent understanding of the content of the Old Testament, and 2) a panoramic view of the history of the ancient Near East, including those events recorded in the Old Testament from the second millenium to the Common Era. The author feels strongly that the Old Testament is an account of events which are, to some extent, historically and empirically verifiable. The Bible is more than a book of history and literature, and it is more than a record of man's discovery of God and God's dealings with man. It is a book of religion and it is a book by which men have lived and died. The teacher should, therefore, recognize all these factors if he is to do justice to the text.

Most scholarly investigations of ancient Near Eastern history acknowledge the existence of a people, the 'Apiru, roughly equivalent to the Hebrews we know in the Old Testament. Most post-nineteenth century Old Testament scholars work under the assumption that Israel's life, culture and writings were to a large degree influenced by the Weltanschauung of the ancient Near East. This means that Israel did not exist in a vacuum. The story of its life, therefore, is not to be found exclusively between two leather covers of a Holy Bible. Her story is that of a small nation caught up in the power politics

of her larger and more influential neighbors. Seen in this light, Israel's history is a "minor sideshow in the larger history of the ancient Near East, and her culture is overshadowed by the more brilliant cultures of antiquity."³

The Old Testament, however, is not a secular history book, nor is it to be understood purely as Historie. Rather, it is a "saving history" of God's actions with a specific people, and their response to that action. It was recorded by men of faith and must be read, to some extent, in the light of that faith. Seen from that perspective, the events become a Heilsgeschichte in which Yahweh is revealed as the Lord of Israel's history. This does not mean that one of the hidden agenda of the curriculum is that of eliciting a faith response from the students. The content of this curriculum is necessarily historical and literary. It is therefore possible to examine the student for knowledge and understanding of facts without requiring that she register certain personal religious convictions; the latter is not within the scope of the classroom teacher's responsibility.

This course of study sets out to do the "descriptive task"⁴ of getting at the Sitz im Leben of the text, and demands no commitment of those using it, save that they involve themselves wholly in the scholarly enterprise, and that they take the Old Testament seriously, on its own terms. The descriptive

³Anderson, B.W., Understanding the Old Testament, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1957.

⁴Stendahl, K., "Biblical Theology," Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, New York: Abington Press, 1962, pp. 418-432.

approach to the Old Testament means putting the story and history back into its original setting and interpreting it in the light of that setting. This approach knows no denominational or ideological barriers, and where they are imposed they discredit the teacher who imposes them. It is the task of the classroom teacher to present the Hebrew Scriptures in the Sitz im Leben of Israel and the ancient Near East. To this extent, the task may be carried out by both the believer and non-believer.

But more must be said on this matter, especially to the teacher who sees the Old Testament as the record of the revelation of Yahweh's mighty acts in history. The Old Testament is not a novel, not even an historical novel. The writers of Hebrew Scripture were not commissioned to write a secular history textbook. Moreover, they were selective about the history which they included in their books. They saw their history as the drama in which Yahweh was revealed, and they wrote their histories from that point of view. The classroom teacher, then, must reckon with that presupposition if he is to take that history seriously. This is not to say that he must not be an objective scholar about his task. But he must go on from there, if he is a believer, to say that the Old Testament is a collection of books about God, and His revelation to Israel through her history. In what manner this enterprise spills over into the realm of hermeneutics is difficult to assess, although it is incumbent upon each teacher that he recognize the religious presuppositions he brings to the Old Testament. This curriculum is designed for use as an academic

course, not as a Sunday School text. The author hopes that the teacher will know the difference between the two, and not confuse their purpose or function.

CLASSROOM PROCEDURE

General Remarks

The teaching of Scripture in high schools is a relatively new enterprise. For this reason, there are few materials geared to the high school teacher who is a novice both to Biblical studies and to teaching. For the lay person trained in theology there are numerous sources which are helpful. But there is little in the way of guides or manuals of instruction geared specifically to the "fine art of teaching" the Bible. Of course, one can find numerous manuals designed for "religious" use, i.e., for use in Sunday Schools. But those materials are generally written from a doctrinal posture and are too didactic for use in the academic classroom. For the professional teacher there are also numerous sources on the methods of teaching a particular grade level, but those are only of partial aid to the teacher working with the Old Testament.

This particular curriculum guide was written with both the teacher and the Biblical scholar in mind. It is first and foremost a guide and is not intended as a carefully marked road map through the history and experiences of the people of Israel. The theologian can expect from this guide only one approach to the study of the Old Testament at the high school level. The professional teacher, on the other hand, will want to consider the information contained in the sources listed under each unit, and to revise any or all of the lessons as he sees fit.

Content of the Curriculum

How does one go about writing a curriculum guide for a subject encompassing approximately 2,000 years of history, only part of which is recorded in thirty-nine books known as the Old Testament? The job is not an easy one, as any teacher knows who has had to write any syllabus suitable for his own specific purposes. At the start of this project, two overarching factors had to be taken into account: (1) the class for whom the curriculum was to be designed, and (2) the subject matter which was to be covered. In the first area the writer was concerned with the age range of the class, their academic standing and any previous acquaintance with Biblical studies. In this particular case, the class was comprised of sophomore girls with heterogeneous backgrounds, not only socially, culturally and economically, but also academically. Only a small percentage had studied ancient history, while almost none of the girls had been exposed to Biblical studies of an objective, historical and critical nature. The time allotted for Old Testament studies at the School was also a consideration. It should also be mentioned that the School is conducted by a community of Religious, many of whom approach Scripture from a subjective and perhaps non-academic orientation.

As to the subject matter itself, this writer had two goals in mind when writing the curriculum: (1) to guide the class through the whole of the Old Testament for its content only,*

*The curriculum has been written to cover the whole Old Testament. However, because this thesis is submitted prior to the conclusion of the academic year, the guide will terminate with the fall of Samaria in 721 B.C.

and (2) to help them understand and evaluate the place of Israel in the culture and history of which she was a part. The aim of the course is to present a panoramic view of Israel's history as recorded in the books of the Old Testament. While this may appear to be a relatively simple task, experience has shown that it is far more complicated, because the record of Israel's history is a complex one, requiring knowledge not only of Biblical content and criticism, but also of the ancient Near East. Once this knowledge is acquired there is the further problem of translating it into language which the high school student can understand. Furthermore, there is a certain "emotional charge" attached to the very word 'Bible' which must be overcome if critical studies are to be taken seriously.

Class Presentation

While professional educators are not in agreement as to the value of the lecture method, lectures have proved to be the most satisfactory way of dealing with the wealth of material which had to be covered. Due to the fact that this course is offered for college entrance credit, it has been necessary to follow the bibliography set up by the National Association of Biblical Instructors, "Course of Study for Secondary School Offering a Unit of Bible for College Entrance."

Ideally, student discussion should be a central part of each class meeting. However, much of the material is so new to the girls, that most of the time is taken up by lectures, with relatively little time for questions and discussion. This

reflects not only the limited background of the class, but also the inexperience of the teacher. If the teacher had more experience she would be able to communicate the same material with a minimum of lectures, supplemented by such other methods of presentation as: student reports and discussion, panel discussions, role plays and skits, and team competition. The crucial issue is not methodology per se, but that the content be adequately communicated. All of these methods may serve that purpose. In those classes which immediately precede an examination or term test, the students are given an extensive review assignment which is discussed in class.

On a few occasions individual girls have asked to teach a lesson. This takes an enormous amount of preparation for the teacher as well as the student, but it is still a valuable way to present the material. It is recommended that the teacher choose her "student teachers" wisely, and help them to think creatively about the lesson to be presented. There is perhaps nothing more discouraging, or revealing than to hear a student conduct a class using the same format and presentation as the teacher, only with less skill and experience.

Assignments and Text Books

The major text for the course is the Old Testament. It is strongly urged that each student own a copy of the Revised Standard Version for study purposes. By and large, the reading assignments are given from the text itself, and they vary in length, depending upon the nature of the material. As a general rule, three chapters are assigned for each class meeting,

and a written précis, designed to let the student express in her own words what she has read. These précis are graded on content and interpretation and collectively count as one part of the student's grade. In addition to written assignments, some map work is done to give the class a geographical orientation. Supplementary reading is from a newspaper account of the Biblical narrative. This book, Chronicles, was compiled by the Reubeni Foundation in Jerusalem for use in Hebrew Schools. While the interpretation is not always the one given by this writer, the format is certainly helpful in giving another perspective on Biblical Studies.

When the material is suitable a more creative project is assigned. Examples of such projects might be: putting a section of the Old Testament into contemporary language, building a scale model of the Temple, writing letters to a contemporary or mythical person from the point of view of one of the Old Testament figures, tracing a theme of an historical or "religious" nature throughout the Old Testament, comparing and contrasting Biblical characters with one another and with present day figures. From time to time the students are also asked to memorize certain passages, e.g., Deut. 6:4-9, 26:5-9, I Sam. 18:33, Amos 5:14-15, 21-24, Hosea 11:1-9, Micah 6:8, Isa. 2:4, 6:1-8, Psalm 144, 137.

A listing of classroom assignments and tests are found within the units and in the Appendix.

CURRICULUM GUIDE

I. Ancient Near Eastern Backgrounds

Sources: J. Bright, A History of Israel, pp. 17-59
F.M. Cross, Jr., "An Epitome of Near Eastern History" (manuscript)
H. Frankfort, et. al., Before Philosophy
G.E. Wright, An Introduction to Biblical Archaeology, chap. 1

A. Mesopotamia

During the Third Dynasty of Ur (2200-2000 B.C.), war was waged between Sumer and Akkad, two cities on the plain between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers known as Mesopotamia (literally, "between the rivers"). The balance of power was maintained first by the Sumerians, then by the Akkadians under Sargon I, and finally by the Sumerians.

As a result of the political confusion, a semi-nomadic people, the Amorites, rose to power, establishing the First Babylonian Dynasty. The last and greatest king of that Dynasty was Hammurabi, famous for his code of laws.

The Amorites ruled in the Fertile Crescent. Archaeologists have found letters dealing with diplomatic correspondence between the king of Mari and other surrounding Amorite states. In these letters we read names such as David, Benjamin and the 'Apiru, a word much like our modern word, Hebrew. It is worth noting here that Abraham, Israel's patriarch, lived in an Amorite settlement known as Haran. In his migration from Haran to Canaan he brought with him many religious legends, among which are creation and flood myths, similar to those found in Genesis.

Due to the political vacuum created by the Sumerians, the Hurrians (Horites in the Bible) invaded the Fertile Crescent. By the time of Hammurabi these peoples were spread throughout the entire Fertile Crescent, and in the fourteenth century were the principle dwellers in the Mesopotamian state of Mitanni. Evidence of their conquests is recorded on the tablets found at the Hurrian city of Nuzi.

Prior to the rise of the kingdom of Mitanni, we see another political power arising on the Fertile Crescent, the Hittites. In an unexpected disaster-play, the Hittites completely destroyed Babylon ca. 1521 B.C. The control of Babylon shifted from kingdom to kingdom until the reign of Tiglath-Pileser I of Assyria who conquered Babylon and the territory west, to the Mediterranean. At the end of his reign, Assyria faltered, under the pressure of the Arameans who attacked the Fertile Crescent from all directions.

B. Egypt

One of the ablest dynasties in Egypt was the Twelfth Dynasty ruled by Amenemhet; for Egypt this was one of the most stable eras in her early history. Some have called it " the golden age of Egyptian culture." Following the death of Amenemhet III the Twelfth Dynasty weakened, and within a few years came to an end. With the balance of power hanging in abeyance between the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Dynasties, the way was opened for an invasion of foreign peoples, the Hyksos. This motley array of peoples dominated Egypt for a century and a half, but were finally overthrown in about 1570 B.C.

An Egyptian revival began during the reign of Thutmose III, resulting in the extension of Egypt's sway throughout Palestine and Syria. The first signs of political weakness appeared during the reign of Amenhotep IV who declared a kind of monotheism in the worship of Aten, the sun disk. He even changed his name to Akhenaton to show his relationship to his god!

Because of internal strife during his reign, a new dynasty took power, that of the Ramesses'. The most famous pharaoh of that dynasty was Ramesses II who agreed to a non-aggression pact with the Hittites following the Battle of Kadesh (1286 B.C.). Ramesses II is most likely the pharaoh during the period of the exodus.

II. Religion in the Ancient Near East

- Sources: W.F. Albright, "The Old Testament World," Interpreter's Bible, Vol. I, pp. 233-271.
B.W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, pp. 1-10, 72-78
M. Black and H.H. Rowley, eds., Peake's Commentary on the Bible, pp. 96-108
H.H. Guthrie, Jr., God and History in the Old Testament, pp. 3-13
J.B. Pritchard, Archaeology and the Old Testament
G.E. Wright, "The Faith of Israel," Interpreter's Bible, Vol. I., pp. 349-389
G.E. Wright, God Who Acts
G.E. Wright, The Old Testament Against its Environment

A. Mythopoetic thought*

If we define myth as a story in which gods or divine beings are the main characters, we must say that there is almost no myth in the Old Testament. But if we see myth as part of man's attempt to describe and interpret the world in which he lived, then surely there are mythical elements all through the Old Testament.

The Hebrews lived in the world of the ancient Near East, and consequently they shared its thought patterns. When ancient man looked at his world he did not distinguish between the animate and the inanimate, the human and the divine. We know, for example, that the language of Gen 3:8 ("that God walked in the garden") was in keeping with the thought patterns of the ancient world. Mythopoeetry like this is man's way of expressing within the bounds of language that which language really could not encompass. To understand more fully the implications of

*The word "mythopoetic" is an adaptation of Henri Frankfort's term "mythopoeic." This author found that "mythopoeetry" and "mythopoetic thought" were simpler words to use with the high school class, and has consequently altered Frankfort's original word.

mythopoetry we shall have to turn to the religions of the peoples of the ancient Near East to see how this thought pattern was developed.

B. Mesopotamian Religion

A discussion of Mesopotamian civilization cannot be separated from a discussion of mythopoetic thought. A Mesopotamian's experience of the forces of nature, e.g., torrential rains, unpredictable tides and scorching winds, gave rise to a view of nature as an expression of the wills of the gods. The Mesopotamian found divine power in the elements of nature. For that reason all natural elements were considered to be members of a cosmic state ruled by the gods. Each state was regarded as the property of one god who ruled from the ziggurrat of his city temple. The gods themselves belonged to a kind of fraternity of gods, each of which had a separate function. There were three over-lords in this assembly: the god of heaven, the god of infinite space and the god of earth to whom a mother goddess was joined. The gods fought among themselves for the place of pre-eminence and with the rise of Babylon, the god Marduk won the reputation of the conqueror and creator god.

Politically the cosmic state was organized into city-states and nation states. Each unit was ruled by a figure who acted as a representative of the gods. The Mesopotamian had an intimate relationship with his gods; we have records of letters written from citizens and rulers of the states to their particular god asking for certain favors or rewards. Earthly success, wealth and long life were seen as gifts given to those men who

were obedient to the will of the gods.

Mesopotamians were a polytheistic people for whom the issues of life were related to the workings of nature. The Mesopotamians were dependent upon the gods whose power manifested itself in the elements of nature. Moreover, there was no distinction between nature and the power behind it; in the sky, the Mesopotamian met the sky god, Anu. Each god not only had a certain personality, but often was complimented by a goddess. The divine and human worlds met in the Mesopotamian king who was an appointee, servant and son of the gods. The king's status as representative of the gods was carefully distinguished from a deification of the king himself. The king was a human being, appointed and adopted by the gods.

Two of the most famous examples of Mesopotamian literature are the "Enuma Elish" or Creation epic, and the "Gilgamesh Epic" or Flood Story. There appears to be a close relationship between the Genesis Flood Story and the Gilgamesh Epic. Students can discover this relationship by comparing the Gilgamesh Epic with the corresponding chapter and verse in the Genesis account.

C. Egyptian Religion

Like the religion of Mesopotamia, Egyptian religion was expressed in mythopoetic terms. But there the similarities end. The sun and the Nile River were central to Egypt's livelihood. It is no wonder, then, that those two were central to her religion as well. The swelling tides of the Nile and the daily rising of the sun were important for an agrarian people. All power emanated from those two events and they were seen as

connected with the rebirth of the gods.

Egyptian religion emphasized balance and proportion, particularly with regard to the structure of the universe. The earth god Geb was the center of their universe, with the sky goddess, Nut, above and the god of the underworld, Naunet beneath. Immediately above Geb lived the air god Shu, while below him dwelt the god of primordial waters, Nun.

In the structure of the Egyptian state the Pharaoh himself was a god incarnate. The Pharaoh was the mediator of the god's blessing to the people. It was through him rather than through the cosmic god directly that the people were preserved. Unlike the Mesopotamians, Egyptians were more impersonal and formal in their intercessions to the deities. Indeed, the gods were perhaps too holy to be addressed at all and so man addressed the Pharaoh who was a participant in the world of the divine.

Mention should be made here of Akhenaton and the Aton heresy. About one century before Moses and Pharaoh Rameses II, there emerged a religion of a monotheistic character under the guidance of Pharaoh Amenhotep IV.

D. Canaanite Religion

The system of worship in the area known as the ^{Palestine} ~~Fertile~~ Crescent was bound up with the fertility of the soil. The fertility of the soil was totally dependent upon the god whose power was immanent there.

At the head of the pantheon of the gods was the high god, El, the father god whose consort was Asherah. Directly below him was Baal, the storm-god. The title Baal means lord and

owner. He was celebrated as the lord of the other gods; and, because he was also the creator, he was seen as the owner of the creation, particularly the soil. We know from the texts found at Ras Shamra that the fertility of the soil was dependent upon his sexual relations with his consort Astart. He, like his father El, was symbolized by a bull, the figure of strength and fertility.

Man's relationship to the gods was achieved through his participation in the fertility cult. This meant that it was possible for man to assist in the fertility of the earth by linking himself to Baal through participation in the sexual rites of the fertility cults. The seasonal cycle of planting and harvesting, the death and rebirth of nature, was linked to the death and rebirth of Baal and was central to the thought of the Canaanite cults.

E. Israel's Religion

Central to an understanding of Israel's religion is the affirmation that Yahweh has revealed himself to a specific people through certain historical events. Unlike her neighbors, Israel did not find her God only in the forces of nature. Although it is true that images of nature are applied to Yahweh, e.g., Psalms 18 and 29 they are still images and not Israel's chief explication of Yahweh. Yahweh transcended nature, operating in the sphere of history, e.g., it was he who brought the children of Israel out of Egypt into the land of "milk and honey." Therefore, there is no need for nature mythology because Yahweh is revealed in history rather than in nature.

Although Yahweh is generally referred to by the masculine pronoun, his person was not seen in exclusively sexual terms, but rather he transcended the realm of sexuality and nature. This is not to say that Israel did not borrow metaphors from the other religions; we note here particularly Psalms 18 and 29 in which we find nature imagery applied to Yahweh. But nature images are relatively non-essential, for Yahweh established a radically new relationship with his people.

Perhaps one of the clearest ways to describe Yahweh's relationship to his people is to use the analogy of human relationships. One pre-condition for two people establishing a relationship is that the parties involved choose to get to know one another. Often when two people want to get to know one another they talk together, exchanging experiences and ideas, and thereby revealing themselves. This revelation may take many forms, although personal conversation and action are two of the most common. But you can usually tell more about a person by the way he operates than by what he says about himself. This analogy applies, in part, to Yahweh -- Israel's God who was seen as someone, who chose to reveal Himself to Israel by His actions in specific situations. This particular point of view is clearly demonstrated in Israel's ancient "credo," Deuteronomy 26:5-9 which explains who Israel was in terms of what Yahweh had done for her and on her behalf:

"My father was a wandering Aramean. He went down into Egypt to find refuge there, few in numbers; but there he became a nation, great, mighty, and strong. The Egyptians ill-treated us, they gave us no peace and inflicted harsh slavery on us. But we called on Yahweh the God of our fathers. Yahweh heard our voice and saw our misery, our toil and our oppression; and

Yahweh brought us out of Egypt with mighty hand and outstretched arm, with great terror, and with signs and wonders. He brought us here and gave us this land, a land where milk and honey flow."
(translation from the Jerusalem Bible, 1966)

The Old Testament, then begins with God, who has chosen to make himself known in certain events. Furthermore, he has been particular in his choice of a people to whom he will reveal himself, much like we are particular about those whom we choose to have as good friends. And in friendship, those involved relate best to each other if they begin with some understanding of the other's point of view. In Old Testament thought, we must say that Israel saw her God as not only active in history, but as the Lord and Ruler of that history.

The Old Testament, then, tells the story of a particular people, from a particular point of view. It describes events and therefore we call the Old Testament religion an historical religion, a sacred or holy history. This makes its content different from a book of American history or even ancient Near Eastern history. The Hebrew Scriptures are written from the point of view that Yahweh is Lord of history and of the world in which that history takes place.

Evaluation: Ancient Near Eastern Backgrounds

The purpose of this unit is to see the Old Testament in the light of its history and background. The writings do not exist de novo, and to do them justice it is only proper to place them in their correct historical perspective. This is not an easy task, given that ancient Near Eastern history is not generally a major part of a student's academic background.

Rather than concentrating on the details of the Sumerian conquests it is better to begin with a general overview of that history, asking the class for the names of those people and places which are familiar to them. Because the class did not understand the significance of this background material for their study of the Old Testament and because most of the material was new to them, the result was chaos. It is therefore recommended that the class members construct a linear time chart, listing only a few significant dates. The chronological charts given in Anderson's Understanding the Old Testament do not necessarily serve to clarify the confusion which results from too many dates and places. Rather, it would be clearer for the teacher to keep the presentation more simple and direct. It is recommended that these dates be listed on a linear time chart:

2000 B.C.	Third Dynasty of Ur
1700 B.C.	Hammurabi (Law Code)
1750 B.C.	Migrations under Abraham
1290 B.C.	Exodus from Egypt
1200 B.C.	Conquest of Canaan
1000 B.C.	United Kingdom under David
922 B.C.	Divided Monarchy
721 B.C.	Fall of Northern Kingdom
587 B.C.	Fall of Southern Kingdom
0 A.D.	Birth of Jesus
1492 A.D.	Columbus; Discovery of America
1776 A.D.	American Revolutionary War
1865 A.D.	Civil War
1966 A.D.	Present date

III. Early History of Israel

- Sources: B.W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, pp. 173-182 (~~1st ed. used throughout~~)
J. Bright, A History of Israel, pp. 60-93
D.N. Freedman, "Pentateuch", Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. 3, pp. 711-727
J.W. Johnson, "The Creation", Masterpieces of Religious Verse, J.D. Morrison (ed.), pp. 265-6
H.G. May (ed.), Oxford Bible Atlas, pp. 56-7
J.B. Pritchard, The Ancient Near East, pp. 12-15, 31-39
G. Von Rad, Genesis (Old Testament Library)
G.E. Wright, An Introduction to Biblical Archaeology, pp. 21-33

A. Critical Studies in the Old Testament

Not unlike other historical narratives, the Old Testament was transmitted originally by word of mouth; this transmission we call "oral tradition." It was not until the tenth century B.C. that certain of these narratives were recorded. Most scholars today would agree that the Pentateuch is a composite work in which several narrative strands have been blended together. According to this hypothesis there are four main literary strands, to which are assigned the symbols J, E, D and P. The first source is the Yahwist or J document, so named because in it God was called Yahweh (Jahweh) in the Patriarchal stories.* This source was probably compiled in the tenth century, roughly about the time of the United Monarchy. The Elohist or E source is usually dated a century later, during the period of the Divided Monarchy. It is called the Elohist because in this docu-

*In those sections of Genesis which are identified as the work of the Yahwist, the word for God is translated from the Hebrew "Yahweh." In the Elohist portions, the Hebrew text reads "Elohim" for the divine name through Exodus 3:15.

ment God is called Elohim.* In the seventh century B.C. the law code of Deuteronomy was compiled. It is believed that this source formed the basis for King Josiah's reform in 621 B.C. (cf. II Kings 22-23). The compiler of the law code and the editors of the books of the Kings are known as the D writers because they have a relatively homogeneous view of Israel's history, stated most explicitly in the book of Deuteronomy. Finally, during and after the Exile, a large work was written describing the origin and history of cultic institutions in Israel. The whole of Leviticus and much of the legislations in Exodus and Numbers comes from this Priestly Code (P source). By about 400 B.C. all of these sources were brought together, giving us the history of Israel's beginnings.

The literature to which the Old Testament writers fell heir was shaped in a wide cultural setting and already had a venerable history and usage when the Hebrews took it over. If we compare the Babylonian creation story "Enuma elish" with the P account of creation in Genesis, we will be able to see that Israel's cosmology was inherited from her cultural environment. The Babylonians pictured the universe as a three-storied structure: flat earth, an arched firmament, and water above and beneath. The habitable world was surrounded by chaotic waters from which the universe emerged. Babylonian mythology posited the pre-existence of watery chaos which must be overcome and controlled if order is to reign. The creation of the universe resulted from the struggle between the god Marduk and

*See footnote on p. 23.

Tiamat, the goddess of watery chaos.

The P account of creation (Genesis 1:1-2:4a) is strikingly similar to the "Enuma elish." In it we find a universe of three layers ("heaven above, earth beneath and water under the earth"), and a pre-existent watery chaos ("the deep"). The Hebrew word for "deep" (tehom) is roughly equivalent to the Babylonian word for Tiamat, which links Babylonian mythology with the Genesis account. In the P source, however, the primeval chaos or tehom recedes into virtual impotence before the absolute and sovereign Lord. The writer does not deal with the philosophical question of creatio ex nihilo. The relatively minor role given to chaos and the freedom of the Creator present a conception of God and creation which separates that view from Babylonian mythology. No longer was it necessary to re-enact the creation annually as they did in Babylonia, for P declares God as the Lord of creation, created once and for all times. Therefore He continues as the Lord of chaos who controls the destiny of the universe.

Both accounts show basically similar stages in the fashioning of the cosmos. Identical creative acts are involved, although sometimes in different order. In both we find light created apart from darkness, and water being separated from solid earth beneath and heavenly firmament above. But these similarities do not extend to the function of the gods in the creation itself. Although Marduk's struggle against Tiamat is a dramatic picture of the opposition of creation and chaos, it is clear that absolute power is not given to Marduk. His lordship is an extension of the supremacy of Babylon, of which he was the patron deity. By contrast, the Lordship of Israel's God

did not depend upon an earthly domain. Furthermore, because God alone creates, the creation points to His sovereignty. And because God stands apart from His creation, creation points to its dependence upon Him.

But we must go on from here to point out where the Genesis accounts differ from each other. In the P source creation is numbered by days; it compresses the eight creative acts into six days. The J source, on the other hand, has no account of time. In the P account, the creation of man occurs at the climax of the creative drama, but in J man is formed first. Moreover, the Priestly writer had depicted God as taking counsel with the divine assembly about the creation of man, "Let us make man in our image," so that man was conceived of as forming a part of the divine plan. Furthermore, P does not present separate acts of creation for man and woman: "So God created man in his own image ...male and female he created them." For the Yahwist, however, man, as the tiller of the soil is regarded as the center of God's creative acts, not the climax. The other forms of living being, including his "helper" are provided as an afterthought for his use. Man alone is shaped from the dust of the earth and he alone is given the breath of life. The Hebrew verb which describes that act is the verb usually associated with the potter's art of fashioning a piece of clay. James Weldon Johnson's poem, "The Creation" picks up the spirit and intent of this imagery in contemporary language.

The purpose of comparing the sources is to indicate man's task and his responsibility to God. Man was created in God's image and as such he stands as a representative of God's

authority over chaos and His involvement in man's destiny. By that act the most intimate human relationship was established with all its potentialities for good and ill. Because the creation points beyond itself to the Creator, creation is a summons to worship, not only because creation testifies to the Creator's wisdom and power, but also because God Himself set one day aside for that specific purpose (Genesis 2:3). The P account culminates in a celebration of the Sabbath, shared by both God and man. This emphasis upon worship was particularly important at the time of the exile when the Priestly code was compiled, because communal worship at that time was the only act in which Israel could define herself as the people of God.

B. The Patriarchs

It is one of the stated aims of this course to present a survey of the contents of the Old Testament. While certain parts of these Scriptures lend themselves to detailed exegesis for the high school class, other sections do not. The stories in Genesis lend themselves quite easily to the survey approach, and for this reason the guide will only list those passages assigned. A commentary on the lessons follows in the evaluation.

Reading:

Abraham and Isaac:	<u>Genesis:</u>
1. The call of Abram	12:1-8
2. Abram in Egypt	12:9 - 13:1
3. Abram and Lot	13:2-18
4. The Covenant with Abram	15:1-21
5. Abram and Hagar	16:1-16
6. The Covenant of Circumcision	17:1-27
7. Yahweh's visit to Abraham	18:1-33
8. Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah	19:1-29
9. Abraham and Isaac	20:1 - 21:7

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|--------------------------------|---------|
| 10. Testing of Abraham | 22:1-19 |
| 11. Choice of a wife for Isaac | 24:1-67 |

Jacob and Esau:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Rivalry of Jacob and Esau | 25:19-34, 26:34 -28:9 |
| 2. Jacob at Bethel | 28:10-22 |
| 3. Jacob at Paddan-aram | 29:1 - 31:55 |

Joseph:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. Joseph sold into slavery | 37:1-36 |
| 2. Joseph in Egypt | 39:1-6, 40:1-23,
41:1-44 |
| 3. Joseph and his brothers in Egypt | 42:1 - 46:7,
47:1-12, 27-31 |
| 4. Jacob's blessing on his twelve sons | 49:1-28 |

Sources: B.W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, pp. 173-182
J. Bright, A History of Israel, pp. 60-93
H.G. May, Oxford Bible Atlas, pp. 56-57
J.B. Pritchard, The Ancient Near East, pp. 12-15
G. Von Rad, Genesis (Old Testament Library)
G.E. Wright, An Introduction to Biblical Archaeology, pp. 21-33

Evaluation: The Patriarchs

Abraham and Isaac. Abraham is the symbol or personification of the Israelite clans which had moved from Mesopotamia to Hebron. We call him the Father of Israel, or the first Patriarch. A comparison may be made here between George Washington, the father of our country, and Abraham, the father of Israel. While we associate certain historical events with Washington we also say that he stands for something, that he is symbolic of the beginnings of America as a new nation. And so also with Abraham. He is not only an historical figure. But he also in some sense transcends that history in that as the first man to respond obediently to the call of Yahweh, he symbolizes the beginnings of Israel. With regard to Abraham's obedience, we must note particularly the testing of Abraham's obedience in Genesis 22.

The class had difficulty wrestling with this story. Why would Yahweh ask Abraham to sacrifice his only son if it was through him that the covenant in Genesis 17 was to be realized? After struggling with the students' inability to conceptualize and to put themselves back in another historical situation, it was put, almost axiomatically, that Yahweh demanded Abraham's sacrifice because it was His nature to demand radical obedience from those whom He had chosen as His people.

The assignments for this section were standard. The class read and wrote *précis* of the sections given on the previous page. Following the stories about Sarah, they were asked to write a letter from Sarah's point of view, using contemporary idioms. The letter was to be written to Sarah's mother, describing the events of the past few years. With only a few exceptions, the letters were historically accurate, and at the same time reflective of the student's own particular life situation.

Jacob. Because of the connection between the Jacob tradition and the E document this section was introduced by an attempt at a short review of the source theory of the Pentateuch. It was not short, however, nor was it technically a review, since the class had forgotten most all that was said about critical studies in the previous lessons. By way of re-introduction, then, it was pointed out that prior to the written documents, there existed a common fund of information known as "oral tradition," which was altered by those transmitting the stories. Using the "Telephone Game" as an illustration, the class observed one kind of oral tradition. The question was raised as to why more than one source existed, and how it was possible to distinguish

between the sources. It was pointed out that as newspaper editorials differ in their interpretation of daily news events, so the writers of the Pentateuch differed from each other in the interpretation of Israel's history. The question about distinguishing between the sources was answered at the simplest level. In the Patriarchal stories, the Yahwist's word for God is translated "LORD" in the Revised Standard Version. E uses the word "God". P uses "God Almighty" which is rendered "El Shaddai" in the Revised Standard Version notes. In the Exodus accounts, the mountain from which Moses received the commandments is called Sinai by J, Horeb by E. Examples of other textual differences may be found in the sources listed on page 23.

Whether or not one decides to present this material to a high school class is a question which must be considered by each teacher on the basis of his training and ability and the academic background of the class. Two considerations are important in any case: (1) that the sources be introduced only after the class has studied the narratives in which they occur, and (2) that because J, E, D and P confuse rather than enlighten the average teenager, the source theory should receive less emphasis than is traditional in Old Testament studies.

The importance of Jacob's place in the patriarchal tradition was emphasized in a discussion of his marriages and twelve sons. The students were assigned the task of making a family tree to include Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Because Jacob was the determinative figure in the constitution of the tribal confederacy and northern tradition, special attention was given to the events at Bethel and Paddan-aram.

Joseph. The Joseph stories reflect the historical conditions of the second millenium when it was entirely possible for a Hebrew to hold a position of power in the Egyptian court. Whatever we may say about the story of Joseph and his brothers, it may be pointed out that a similar motif is present in the Egyptian folk tale, "The Story of Two Brothers." Whether or not there existed a Pharoah who knew Joseph is questioned by many Old Testament scholars.

At the conclusion of this section one full class period was devoted to a review of Genesis. The class had received a review sheet which they were to use in preparation for class discussion. The assignments and the test on Israel's origins are found in the Appendix and need little explanation.

C. The Exodus

Reading:

Israel's bondage in Egypt: Exodus 1:1-22
Infancy and early career of Moses: Exodus 2:1-22
Call of Moses: Exodus 2:23 - 4:17
Moses as deliverer: Exodus 5:1 - 6:1, 12:21-39,
13:17-22, 14:5-31
Moses as leader and judge: Exodus 15:20 - 16:15, 16:31, 18
Chronicles, Numbers 7,8,9

Sources:

B.W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, pp. 38-50
J. Bright, A History of Israel, pp. 97-113
C.F. Burke, God is for Real, Man, pp. 20-22
B. Cosby, "Noah" (Warner Bros. recording #1518, Bill Cosby is a very funny fellow)
H.H. Guthrie, Jr., God and History in the Old Testament, pp. 32-33
L. Ginzberg, The Legends of the Jews, pp. 1-53, 86-147, 227-407
H.G. May (ed.), Oxford Bible Atlas, pp. 58-59
M. Noth, Exodus, pp. 9-150
G.E. Wright, An Introduction to Biblical Archaeology, pp. 34-43

In order to prepare the class for the exodus and Sinai events, this unit opened with a short review of the Genesis account. The lecture was based, in part, on The Legends of the Jews, and is printed below in its entirety.

Background for Moses and the Exodus

You have found out that Genesis is divided into two sections: chapters 1-10 and 12-50. You know that the first section tells us something about man and that the second section begins the narrative of God's dealings with Israel through the the Patriarchs.

You also know something about Israel's history and where she stood in the whole of the ancient Near East. You know of the importance of Babylonia and Mesopotamia and the Mari Letters and the Gilgamesh Epic, and the growth of Egyptian power.

You are as well familiar with the "Fathers of the Hebrew Country" and you know that they are called Patriarchs: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

You know also that God is someone and that He has revealed Himself in specific events in history, more specifically in Israel's history and that He has shown Himself to be the Lord or Ruler of that history -- the One who knows what is really going on (the originator of the cosmic grapevine, if you will).

You know something about the stories which were written down in the book of Genesis; that it was written by different groups of people, each with a different point of view. And you are familiar with the content of the stories, and can recognize the names when they are mentioned.

Finally, and by no means least, you know that Abraham was chosen by God to be "his man in Canaan" because he was faithful and knew how to take orders. It was not because Abraham was the coolest guy around, that he was singled out to lead the Hebrews. He knew what obedience was all about. That wasn't easy for Abraham, nor is it easy today. There were many other gods Abram could have worshipped, and he could have been spared a lot of anxiety if he had chosen to follow Marduk. But he stuck it out, and we remember that when we read over and over again in the Old Testament, "the God of your Fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." These names are symbolic for us, much in the same way as George Washington is symbolic for Americans.

Genesis, then, deals primarily with two subjects: (1) the prologue or beginnings of mankind, and (2) the patriarchs and stories which have grown up around them. Essentially it is a

book which deals with individuals. What is more, it is much like an overture to a symphony in that it may be played alone as a single composition which has a pretty clear beginning and end. It tells, simply, the pre-history of Israel's relationship with Yahweh.

The Book of Exodus, on the other hand, is a narrative which cannot be read without continuing on to the other books of the Torah. It is much like the first act of an opera in that it depends upon the other acts and scenes to give it its full meaning.

To put it another way: In Genesis, God is pretty much the director and producer and chief actor of His play. He is the One who creates the scenery, lighting, supporting cast and stage hands. All the actors take their cues directly from Him because He has written the script. But God, after talking it over with His stage hands, the angels, decides that He'd like to take a less directive role. He wants a leading man and leading lady. And so He creates leading characters and gives them more freedom than any of the other actors have had thus far. But, as life would have it, they forget their lines and miss their cues, so that the Director has to withhold their pay checks. This kind of discipline doesn't seem to work because their successors continue to miss lines and forget the stage directions. In fact, these actors rewrite the script without His approval, forcing the Director and Producer to shut down the theatre. He not only takes all the props with Him, but He also wipes out the entire cast, except for one stage hand who happens to be pretty good at carpentry. After a bit, the Director realizes that He can't continue to run the show all by Himself, so He reinstates a certain few and builds His cast around them.

The scene changes and we switch to a new set. Here we find that the Director is a bit more free in his assignment of parts, and auditions a leading man, who happens to have a leading lady who is hired as part of a "package deal." This actor, while not having a great deal of experience in "method acting," has indeed learned to follow directions. For this reason he is given a bigger part, with more lines and greater responsibility. And the Director is happier with that arrangement anyway.

The drama, with its new cast, opens in a small town. The performances are solid and so well received that the company grows in size. The Director knows that bigger things are ahead for his travelling troupe, and so he moves them to out of town tryouts (like New Haven and Boston). Rave reviews are received from the critics and thus the Director moves his troupe to Broadway. There the final contract is signed.

The Exodus

The Book of Exodus begins about four centuries after the

death of Joseph. "Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph." These words in Exodus 1:8 refer to the restoration of a national Egyptian dynasty, probably the Nineteenth Dynasty founded by Seti I (1309-1290). There can be little doubt but that the exodus from Egypt occurred during that dynasty with Pharaoh Rameses II (1290-1224) the Pharaoh of the oppression.

Central to the story of the exodus is Moses. While the account of his rescue from the bulrushes may reflect a legend about Sargon and gives a Hebrew etymology to an Egyptian name (Moses is from an Egyptian word meaning 'to bear', found in such names as Thutmosis), there is no reason to doubt his training in the Egyptian court and his flight from Egypt.

Most biblical scholars would agree that the route of the exodus is under dispute. Because the Exodus records and our knowledge of ancient geography are imprecise, we can only construct a reasonable hypothesis. According to Exodus 13:17 the Israelites did not choose "the way of the land of the Philistines." The route referred to here is the main coastland highway leading up into Canaan through the coastland. A glance at a map (see Appendix) will indicate that the route did not take them toward the Red Sea. The Hebrew for Red Sea is 'Reed Sea.' There are no reeds in the Red Sea, and if the Red Sea were meant, it would have been necessary to cross a considerable area of desert to get to it. Rather, the route probably took them in the direction of Lake Timsah or the southern tip of Lake Menzaleh.

Exodus 14 contains the J account of the migration from Egypt. In this account, the crossing of the Reed Sea occurred

when an east wind drove the waters back. This is not impossible for a shallow body of water such as Lake Timsah. What is important about the crossing is that the Sea became dry land just as the Israelites approached it. From their point of view, this miracle was a sign of the active presence of Yahweh in Israel's history. The narrative climax occurs in Exodus 15:12 when it tells how Miriam sang a hymn in praise of Yahweh. This couplet is one of the oldest verses in the Old Testament, and probably originated during the very event it celebrates.

Israel saw in the series of events centering in the exodus the matrix of her faith. The Yahwist stresses the exodus event in his narrative, and particularly the role of Moses who saw into the event the purpose and righteousness of Yahweh. Indeed, the event without a Heilsgeschichte interpretation would have been totally insignificant for Israel. Moses was a man of faith, however, and his recognition of Yahweh's presence in the exodus event became a central principle of the theology of the J writer. Later writers celebrate the deliverance as the center of Israel's confessions of faith and cultic worship, e.g., Psalm 66:6, 78:13, 81:7, 105:37 ff., Hosea 11:1.

D. Sinai Covenant

Reading:

The Hebrews at Sinai: Exodus 19
E version of the Decalogue: Exodus 20:1-21
J version of the Decalogue: Exodus 34:10-28
Ratifying the Covenant: Exodus 24
The golden calf: Exodus 32
Chronicles, Number 10

Sources:

B.W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, pp. 50-59

- J. Bright, A History of Israel, pp. 113-117, 128-142, 149-151
C.F. Burke, God is for Real, Man, pp. 23-25
H.H. Guthrie, Jr., God and History in the Old Testament, pp. 40-47
G.E. Mendenhall, "Law and Covenant in Israel and the Ancient Near East"
M. Noth, Exodus, pp. 151-201, 241-252

A covenant is a pact or treaty between two parties sealed by an oath. A variety of covenant agreements were known in the ancient world. It was not uncommon to find seminomadic tribes united for the purpose of fending off a common enemy. Individual persons also made agreements of a covenantal nature, much in the same manner as two people agree to be friends.

In the international structure of the ancient Near East, however, there were two kinds of political covenants, the parity treaty between equals and the suzerainty treaty between an emperor or suzerain and a vassal. Israel's relationship to Yahweh was one of an obedient people to a divine ruler. Israel knew that it was Yahweh who had freed her from Egyptian bondage, that it was He who led her through the perils of the Reed Sea. By rehearsing those events, Israel said who she was and to whom she was obedient. It was in the Sinai event, however, that this obedience of Israel was to take a more "structured" form. The language which Israel used to describe her relationship to Yahweh was the language she had known and which was used in the culture of which she was a part.

Because Israel was situated in the ancient Near East, and because Yahweh was her king or suzerain, the language which she used to describe her relationship to that king was the language available to her at that time.

It is no surprise, then, that Israel's covenant with Yahweh took the form of a suzerainty treaty. The model of this is the Decalogue or Ten Commandments, the classic statement of Israel's covenant. If we compare these two documents line by line, we find the following common form: (1) Preamble in which the author of the treaty is identified (Ex. 20:2a), (2) Historical prologue which describes the previous relations between the two parties (Ex. 20:2b), (3) The stipulations which state the obligations of the vassal (Ex. 20:3-17), (4) Provision for deposit in the temple and periodic public reading of the treaty (Deut. 31:9-13), (5) A list of gods as witnesses mentioned indirectly in the prophets where Israel was accused of violating the covenant (Isa. 1:2-3, Jeremiah 2:11-12, Micah 6:1-2), (6) Cursings and blessings formula (Deut. 28).

In the ancient Near East the realm of meaningful action was located in the sphere of the divine, not in the human. For the ancient Near Eastern man it was the action of the gods which had significance. In Mesopotamia, for example, it was man's purpose to serve the gods and to seek their welfare. By writing letters to one's personal god favors would be granted and a prosperous life assured. The king of Mesopotamia stood as the representative of the god. During the annual New Year's Festival, when the battle between primeval watery chaos and order was reenacted, it was the king who took the identity of the victorious god Marduk. Man was a slave to the great cosmic forces. He served and obeyed them and his only means of influencing them was by prayer and sacrifice or by persuasion and gifts.

The situation in Egypt was of a different sort. The king was thought to be a direct descendent of the gods and if man wanted a favor, he addressed the king, not the god himself. The king was the point of contact between men and gods as the divine ruler vested with concern for the state. In later Egyptian thought (during the Empire) a deterministic philosophy was developed in which man was the helpless agent, subject always to the will of god. Man was admonished to mind his own affairs, since his destiny was totally in the hands of the gods.

In Canaan the worship of Baal stood at the center of man's relationship to god. The fertility of the earth was a manifestation of his power and rule. A fruitful harvest and the annual revival of nature after a barren winter signified the sexual relationship between Baal and his consort Baalath (Astarte). It was man's obligation to imitate the action of the gods which would bring that pair together in fertilization. The dramatization of these actions was a prominent feature of Canaanite cultic worship.

In contrast to this, Israel's relationship to Yahweh was startlingly unique. No longer was man asked to imitate the gods, to cajole or barter with them for favors. No longer was man a puppet of the gods. The covenant meant that Yahweh took man's actions seriously. It was in this covenant that man was drawn into a relationship where human action was significant. Far from being oppressive or legalistic, the Decalogue laid demands upon the people of God which gave meaning to their lives. The covenant affirmed the lordship of God in the face of chaos. Life now found its meaning as Yahweh was obeyed. The ten words,

or Decalogue, are covenantal stipulations indicating how Israel was to maintain her relationship with Yahweh and how she was to conduct her internal affairs within that covenant community.

A word must be said at this point about the particular forms of law to which Israel was subject. Laws in the Old Testament fall into two major categories as regards form: apodictic and casuistic. The former category is found in the Decalogue and may be identified by the stipulations: "thou shalt...thou shalt not". While this form of law was not entirely unique to Israel, it may be regarded as her distinctive contribution. But apodictic law did not cover every possible contingency, nor did it provide any sanction except the promised wrath of Yahweh. It stated only certain areas of conduct which were required or forbidden. Precisely because the Decalogue did not legislate for specific cases, a case law or casuistic law developed shortly after the Sinai event. This category of law ("If a man does" so and so, then --) was widely paralleled in other ancient law codes. Israel most likely adapted the law form from the people in her midst who were of the same background as her ancestors. While this form was not unique to Israel, we may say that she was unique in that she saw all law subsumed under the will of Yahweh, the upholder of the law.

Whether or not the teacher decides to present this material to a high school class is to be determined on the ability of the student to grasp its significance for Israel's history. Again it must be pointed out that too many details may confuse rather than enlighten the average student.

Evaluation: Exodus and Sinai Covenant

Because the Exodus and Sinai events cannot rightfully be separated from each other, it is important for the teacher to present them as part of the same historical continuum. One way that this may be done is to explain both events in the light of the doctrine of election, tracing back to Abram's calling in Genesis 12:1-3. The Exodus and covenant events follow as a witness to Yahweh's faithfulness to his promises.

The most concrete expression of the doctrine of election is found in the language of the covenant. The Decalogue is the classic statement of the covenant, though other covenants are found in the Old Testament, e.g., the covenants with Abram and Noah. Perhaps one of the most difficult concepts for the high school student to grasp is the one which says that Israel's existence had meaning as the covenant was obeyed. An analogy drawn between the covenant and family rules may help to clarify that concept.

The two "classic" assignments for this unit are the following: (1) the map of the exodus route, and (2) the Decalogue rewritten in contemporary language. Due to the length of the written assignments for this unit, the class was given a map already drawn by the teacher; this map helped to focus class discussion on the literary-critical problem of Red Sea vs. Reed Sea. The class was assigned, however, to write their own version of the Decalogue and this proved to be an extremely enlightening task, in terms of the religious, cultural and academic diversification of the class membership. More than any other writing

assignment, this one gave invaluable insights into the varied backgrounds of the students. It is recommended that a certain literary and historical standard be set by the teacher so that the class will be able to write with the understanding that these Words had something to say about Israel's existence as the people of God.

E. Tribal Government and Shechem

Reading:

Moses' approach to the Promised Land and his death:
Numbers 13:1-3, 17-33, Deuteronomy 34, Joshua 1:1-9,
6, 11:23, 24.
Chronicles, Numbers 12, 13.

Sources:

B.W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, pp. 60-91
G.E. Mendenhall, "The Hebrew Conquest of Palestine"
M. Noth, The History of Israel, pp. 53-109

According to tradition, Israel spent forty years wandering in the wilderness. Details of the wanderings are found in the book of Numbers. The title "Numbers" is taken from the first significant word of that book which means "in the desert of". The Latin translators of the Bible gave the book a descriptive title and it is from this translation that the English title "Numbers" receives its name. Although Numbers presents no logical or predetermined plan, we may say that the narrative falls into three major sections: (1) the numbering of Israel's clans and their journey from Sinai to Canaan (chs. 1-14), (2) the forty years of wandering in the wilderness (chs. 15-19), and (3) the final march to the edge of the Jordan opposite Jericho (chs. 20-26).

Our concern lies with the wilderness wanderings because they are the transition between the Sinai covenant and the conquest of Canaan. Israel had accepted the covenant in obedience, but that obedience did not hold strong in the face of the hunger and poverty which Israel experienced in the wilderness. Israel remembered all too well the opulence of her fare in Egypt, and found the wilderness diet far too sparse. The hardships of desert life compelled the Israelites to look elsewhere for a home. In his wisdom, Moses sent spies to survey the land of Canaan which lay directly to the north. The scouts returned with the report that the land was "flowing with milk and honey." However, it was also reported that the land was inhabited by men who looked like giants in comparison to the size and strength of the Israelites.

The book of Deuteronomy ends with an account of Moses' death. With the appointment of Joshua as his successor we begin a new era in Israel's life which will culminate in the tribal accession of the land.

The book of Joshua is the climax of the Pentateuch narratives, i.e., in it we find the fulfillment of the promise that Israel will be given the land of Canaan. The book of Joshua gives the story of the conquest of that land in three swift campaigns: (1) west of the Jordan River, (2) the southern hill country, and (3) the northern hill region above the Valley of Jezreel. The historian who compiled these conquests depicts Joshua as the national hero of a united Israel. The thoroughness of the conquest is indicated in Joshua 11:16-23.

This is only one view of the conquest, however, and evidence

from other Biblical writings gives reason to doubt the accuracy of that historian's view. The most striking evidence against the total conquest by a united Israel is given in the next book of the Old Testament which opens with the question "Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?" (Judges 1:1).

This other point of view on the conquest says that Canaan was taken by Israel as a result of gradual infiltrations by individual tribes. There is also some evidence to support the opinion that the entire land of Canaan was not conquered completely until some time after the death of Joshua.

While it is important to realize that Joshua 1-12 was written from the Deuteronomist pen, we may not dismiss it altogether, due to the complexity of the situation. However inaccurate we may find the claims of Joshua 1-12, it must be said that Israel could very well have taken the hill country, even with their primitive weapons and strategy. Of course the purpose of the unified account is not to exalt the place of Joshua in Israelite history. It is, rather, to declare that Yahweh won victory through his obedient servant. As Israel saw the presence of God in deliverance from Egyptian bondage, so she also recognized Him in giving her the land to which she had been called.

One of the most significant chapters in this history of Israel is Joshua 24. The subject is the meeting called by Joshua at Shechem. This city had been the scene of previous political struggles, e.g., it was used by the Hyksos and the Egyptians. Shechem also had a great religious background, at one time being the center of worship for Baal Berith, the Canaanite god. And

it was to this center that Joshua called the Israelite tribes to rehearse their past history. Beginning with the patriarch Abram, going down through the exodus, and concluding with the conquest of Canaan, Joshua reminded the gathered assembly of Yahweh's mighty acts. On the basis of this rehearsal, Joshua asked the people to decide for themselves who would be their god. Reminding them, in Canaanite territory, that Yahweh was a jealous god, the people chose to follow Joshua and give total and unreserved allegiance to the One who had brought them to that place. The ceremony concluded with a renewal of the covenant.

If we are to understand the events which took place at Shechem, we must first acknowledge that the religion of the peoples from northeast Syria was strongly tribal centered, with the deity regarded as a member of the tribe. From the earliest times, Israel had to cope with the dangers of this inherited tribal religion which fostered an "in-group ethic" of local particularism. Joshua 24 emphasizes a sharp break with tribal religion in its assertion that unity of the people of Israel was based solely on their worship of Yahweh. This is particularly significant in light of the fact that the groups which gathered at Shechem were not all lineal descendants from a single ancestor.

The tribal peoples who gathered at Shechem were not all descendants of immigrants from northeast Syria. Many spoke different dialects as the shibboleth incident (Judges 12:6) indicates. Others were most likely of Canaanite or Aramean descent. We cannot say, then, that the tribal membership was based solely upon biological connection. Israel began as a religious commu-

nity, not as an ethnic sodality. It was only in later times of historical calamity that she relied upon biological continuity based on endogamy to mark her off as a distinctive people.

What Israel did at Shechem in that covenant renewal, she would continue to do for a long time to come, particularly as succeeding generations grew up who had not witnessed the early events of Israel's history. To be an Israelite in the thirteenth century B.C. it was necessary for one to link the present with the past, to say for oneself that the story of Yahweh's acts in past history would be the story of Yahweh's acts in one's present history. It was simply a matter of saying that in order really to be Israel, one necessarily understood and subscribed to those events which made Israel who she was. We can compare this acceptance of Israel's history to our study of United States history in which we learn of the victories of America's forefathers. We see, for example, that the story of the Revolutionary War did not belong merely to the Thirteen Colonies, but rather to all who call themselves Americans. That history is our story now, just as much as it was their story in the eighteenth century A.D.

We must also note here that Israel organized itself into twelve tribes and that the thing which bound them together was their common religious heritage. These tribes had a central place for cultic worship which each tribe cared for, in its turn. All the regular festivals were held in that religious center, and the laws which bound the tribes together were administered from that center.

This organization into a confederacy was not a new idea. The Greeks had somewhat the same organizational pattern, although

they called their instructions "city-states," and found their common bond to be a political one. We call that organization an amphictyony which means a number of tribes.

In times of military emergency, these tribes banded together to face a common foe, and because of this there was, to some extent, a unity in language, customs and political interests. We call this unity, if it is based on religious interests, a theocratic community, and this is indicated by the name Israel, one interpretation of which means "may God rule."

Shechem was the center of worship for the twelve tribes. At a later time the central sanctuary was moved to Shiloh, where the Ark was kept. At that center one of the main religious functions of the cultic representative was to rehearse the religious code of laws, which we know today as the Ten Commandments or Decalogue.

F. The Judges and the Period of Conquest

Reading:

Judges 4:1 - 7:21, 10:9, 11:29-39a, 13:24 - 16:31
Chronicles, Numbers 14 and 15

Sources:

B.W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, pp. 93-114
J. Bright, A History of Israel, pp. 150-160
C.F. Burke, God is for Real, Man, pp. 26-28

Despite the fact that Judges 1:1 dates the contents of the book after the death of Joshua, it is clear that Judges 1:1 is not a sequel to Joshua but parallel to it. Both Joshua and Judges give accounts of the settlement of the Israelite tribes in Canaan. In Joshua the dominant tradition is of a rapid conquest by all Israel acting together under Joshua, but there is

evidence in Judges of another tradition of a partial and gradual conquest.

The book of Judges carries forward the story of Israel's occupancy of Canaan. The conquest was not actually completed until the time of David (ca. 1000 B.C.) and hence was a long drawn-out process extending over a period of two and a half centuries. After the period of the conquest Israel's security and independence were threatened. Some of the tribes were subdued by Canaanite neighbors, while others were harried by raiders from the east. Tribal allotment, then, did not automatically carry with it factual possession; that required arduous effort on the part of the family clans making up the several tribes. The book of the Judges may be characterized as the story of consolidation and expansion of positions which were occupied from patriarchal times or won under Joshua, or were occupied by gradual infiltration.

The central characters in this story are the judges themselves, men and women who had been chosen as tribal leaders. Apparently there was a sudden accession of power, skill, strength and the gift of leadership at their calling. It was because of these charismatic gifts that the judges came to exercise authority, and not by virtue of any formal appointment or lineal succession.

The office of judge in Israel's history had essentially two functions: (1) military leadership, and (2) covenant mediator. As a military leader, it was the responsibility of the judge to deliver his tribe in time of oppression. Judges 4 and 5 describe a victory over the Canaanites which was inspired by the prophetess Deborah. It is the only instance in Judges of a

major conflict between Israelites and Canaanites after Joshua's campaigns. The next major victory took place in the central hill country. Led by the judge Gideon, the Israelites took the territory associated with the Midianites. The aggression of the Ammonites against Gilead was repelled by Jephthah, who lost his daughter because of a rash vow. The stories of Samson are of a different kind and are perhaps legendary. Unlike the other judges, Samson carried out his attack against the Philistines single handed.

In addition to the function of charismatic military leadership, the judges also acted as mediators of the covenant. The title "judge" is derived from a Hebrew verb shaphat which means "to judge" or "to act as a magistrate." The noun "judge" (shophet) is derived from the same Hebrew stem and means "one who brings vindication, who sets things right." During the period in which Israel was structured politically into individual tribal units, it was the function of the judge to uphold the law in these local communities. This office, which was different from that of the charismatic leader, could be pictured as an administration of justice, (mishpat) which guarded the continuity of legal traditions. This institution of an administrator of justice persisted right into the period of the monarchy.

But this body of law, to some extent taken over from the Canaanites, did not have a secular character. For Israel, all law was of divine origin, particularly that law which was given at Sinai. The primary task of the judge was to be a mediator of divine or covenantal law. He was to remain loyal to Yahweh, and to spell out this loyalty in terms which Israel could

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understand. Israel's present history was seen in the light of past events -- nomadic existence, slavery and deliverance, the Sinai covenant and subsequent wanderings. Israel now possessed a land of her own. The judges saw all of these events as a manifestation of Yahweh's purpose for his chosen people. The job of covenant mediator, then, was to bring these events to the attention of the people, and to declare the necessity for absolute loyalty to the sovereign God. It was precisely because the judges themselves were loyal to the demands of the covenant that they could stand as judges. These were men who knew that Israel's existence as a nation found meaning only as the covenant was obeyed. Their authority was given by Yahweh, the suzerain of the covenant. Only by obedience to him could the judges act as agents of his deliverance.

Evaluation: The Judges and the Period of Conquest

Whatever one may say about the theories of conquest, it is important that the class realize that this period was one of adaptation and consolidation. These years marked the transition from a seminomadic to an agrarian way of life. The period of the Judges saw improvements in the areas of farming, building and commerce. But Israel's adaptation occurred at the religious level as well. It must be remembered that the Israelites were planted on Canaanite soil. Since Canaan was ahead of Israel in cultural advancements, cultural borrowing took place on all fronts. It was inevitable that some Israelites saw an agrarian religion as a necessary by-product of an agrarian life. Many Israelites adopted the worship of Baal, the Canaanite god

of fertility. The book of Judges records this period as one of religious uncertainty.

Regarding the tribal amphictyony, it may be pointed out that this form of government lasted in Israel for nearly 200 years. The emergencies which Israel faced during those years were such that an occasional gathering of the clans would suffice to stop them. The amphictyony as a form of government was sufficient for that time. With the advent of the Philistine crisis, however, Israel was confronted with an emergency which she could not meet. The usefulness of a loosely structured tribal government was ended, and Israel found herself placed in a position which demanded fundamental change.

Regarding the office of the judge and his administration of the law, it must be said that this issue is indeed a complex one. Administration of the law was closely related to the self-understanding of Israel as a covenant community under Yahweh. The covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel was intimately involved in actual judicial proceedings. At this point in the curriculum, the teacher may want to review the two major categories of the law (cf. p. 39) so that the class has a firm understanding of the significance of the administrative function of the judges.

G. First Steps Toward Monarchy

Reading:

Eli and Samuel: I Sam. 1, 3
The Capture of the Ark by the Philistines: I Sam. 4:1b - 7:2
The Early Promonarchial Source: I Sam. 9:1 - 10:16,
13:3b, 4b-15

The Late Antimonarchical Source: I Sam. 7:3 - 8-22,
10:17-27, 12, 15
Saul, Jonathan and David: I Sam. 16, 17:1-11, 32-58,
18:1-16, 19, 20
Chronicles, Numbers 16, 17

Sources:

B.W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, pp. 114-132
J. Bright, A History of Israel, pp. 163-174
C.F. Burke, God is For Real, Man, pp. 29-35
H.H. Guthrie, Jr., God and History in the Old Testament,
pp. 14-22

Prior to the establishment of a monarchy in Israel, there existed two major cultic centers around which Israel's political and religious life revolved. In the north, the center was first at Shechem, and later at Shiloh. The clans which gathered at this center were those whose origins we may trace to the sons of Rachel and her maid Bilhah (Joseph, Benjamin, Dan and Naphtali). These clans were loosely organized into a tribal confederation known as the "sons of Israel" or later, Israel. Their loyalty to one another, while based originally on kinship ties, was expressed in terms of loyalty to Yahweh. In light of the demands placed upon them by the covenant, the sons of Israel responded in uncompromising loyalty to the Suzerain of that covenant and in cultic celebrations of the mighty acts of Yahweh manifested in Israel's occupation and conquest of Canaan.

In the south, the cultic sanctuary was probably centered at Hebron. The clans which gathered there were descendants from the sons of Leah and her maid Zilpah (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Gad and Asher). These tribes were known as the "house of Judah," and we have evidence of the fact that non-Hebrew clans were included in that confederacy. We recall, particularly, that Abraham was associated with Hebron, and that

Hebron was originally an Amorite settlement, not Hebrew. Furthermore, the area of Kadesh-barnea seemed to be important in the southern tradition. According to the Exodus accounts the Israelites left Sinai and moved to Kadesh-barnea where they stayed for a considerable period of time. At Kadesh-barnea, the southern tribes doubtless came into contact with the non-Hebraic groups in the area. We may suppose that whole clans were converted to Yahwism, filling out Israel's tribal structure.

Certain conclusions may be drawn from these accounts. We know, first of all, that the land of Canaan was occupied and settled by a process of gradual infiltration, as well as by military conquest. We know also that before the monarchy there existed two loosely organized groups of tribes, one in the north, centered at Shechem and Shiloh, and one in the south at Hebron. From non-Biblical sources, it also appears that there was no major attempt at centralizing the power of either tribal confederation.

In the thirteenth century Israel's existence as a tribal amphictyony was seriously threatened by her neighbors, the Philistines. They were not apparently a numerous people, but their strong military tradition, superior weaponry, and their control of the coastal trade routes of Canaan posed an unsurmountable threat to Israel's security. The loose structure of her tribal confederacies could not stand in the face of a united Philistine attack. The Israelites were ill-trained, ill-equipped and militarily divided. The decisive blow came sometime after 1050 B.C. at the edge of the coastal plain. The Israelites at that time had brought the Ark from Shiloh to the scene of battle in the

hope that Yahweh's presence would quell the Philistine attack. The outcome, however, was utter defeat. Shiloh was taken and the Ark was captured. Israel now was a subject people.

The guiding spirit in these days was Samuel. Dedicated to Yahweh before his birth, Samuel served under the priest Eli as a young boy. When the Ark was taken from its shrine at Shiloh, Samuel's role became one of judge, the administrator of the covenant laws among the clans. More than any other single charismatic figure, Samuel labored to keep the amphyctyonic tradition alive. But the Israelites finally realized that stronger leadership was needed. The Philistine oppression forced Israel to demand that her judge also be her king.

Out of this situation there arose the man Saul, Israel's first king. In I Samuel we have two theories regarding Saul's leadership. These two points of view may be traced in I Samuel 1 - 12, although they continue through the end of II Samuel. The Promonarchical tradition found in I Samuel 9:1 - 10:16 gives an account of the meeting between Samuel and Saul in which the latter is secretly anointed as "prince" over Israel. This prophetic act of Samuel was confirmed publicly by Israel at Gilgal after Saul's victory over the Ammonites (I Samuel 11). According to this source, Saul is shown as a seer, not a judge, who had come to Samuel to locate his father's lost asses. According to the account in I Samuel 10 Saul is anointed by Samuel in secret, by orders from Yahweh. The people of Israel pay no part in the choice of Saul as king in this source.

The Antimonarchical tradition is found in I Samuel 7:3 - 8:22, 10:17-27, 12. The picture of Samuel here is not one of

a seer as in the Promonarchical source, but that of a judge. His judgment over the Israelites led them to victory against the Philistines (I Samuel 7:5-14). There is a notable difference in the attitude of this source in the establishment of the monarchy. According to I Samuel 8:4-9, the idea of monarchical rule for Israel was unfavorably received by both Samuel and Yahweh. According to this text, Samuel had attempted to establish an hereditary line of judges, by appointing his sons to that office. Joel and Abijah, however, did not share Samuel's charismatic spirit and this, in part, forced the tribal elders to request that Samuel appoint a king for them. The Antimonarchical tradition regards the establishment of a kingdom as Israel's attempt to vie with the political structures of her neighbors. The establishment of a monarchical rule for Israel they said was doomed to failure.

This source continues at 10:17-27 where the people gather at Mizpah to draw names by lot for the tribe from which the king will be selected. The small and centrally located tribe of Benjamin is chosen, and Saul is drawn as king. In this source Saul is not anointed by Samuel. Rather he announces that Saul is the man whom Yahweh has chosen as Israel's king. The source concludes in I Samuel 12 with the last address of Samuel. In his function as judge, Samuel rehearses some of Yahweh's providential acts to Israel, showing thereby how kingship implied a rejection of Him, but promising Yahweh's help if they would be obedient to the demands of the covenant.

Saul's reign began with successful military action, reminiscent of the exploits of the judges. In many ways Saul resem-

bles these earlier leaders more than the later kings. He gathered around him a force of warriors who formed at least the nucleus of a standing army, but there is no indication that he restructured the tribal confederacies or that he developed anything like the royal household and administrative service which existed in later times. He reigned in simple state at Gibeah. From the record of his campaign, however, it is evident that he exercised a certain authority over the southern and central parts of the country. His victory at Jabesh-Gilead and Jonathan's success at Michmash won lasting loyalty for Saul's relations with David. The tradition about Saul had, of itself, no intrinsic independence for it had its eye on the one who was to come. Indeed, the stories about Saul and David are really stories about David, as evidenced by the fact that they are placed in the book which gives the account of David's rise to power.

According to I Samuel 16:14-23 David the Bethlehemite was added to Saul's retinue as court musician to bring the king relief in times of mental distress. Another account of Saul's introduction to David is found in I Samuel 17:55-58 immediately following the story of David and the Philistine giant. However popular that story may be, we must say that the first account of David's meeting with Saul is the more reliable.

David's career falls roughly into three main divisions: (1) his life prior to the death of Saul (I Sam. 15-31), (2) his reign over Judah and subsequently over Israel at Hebron (II Sam. 1-5:3) and (3) his reign over Israel and Judah at Jerusalem (II Sam. 5 - I Kings 2:11). According to the more reliable source, David was introduced to Saul's retinue as court musician

to drive away the fits of melancholia that troubled the king. But David's talents were not limited to his skill with the lyre. He was also "a man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence..." (I Sam. 16:18). With such equipment, he became a popular figure and was made the king's armor-bearer. David was a close friend of the king's son Jonathan; he also married the king's daughter, Michal. Saul had become jealous of the young man, particularly in the face of David's military prowess, of which the people chanted "Saul has slain his thousands/and David his ten thousands" (I Sam. 18:7). Much of Saul's reign is concerned with the unsteady relations between the two men: first Saul's attempt at taking David's life, then David's outlawry in the hill country of Judah, and finally his exile in Philistine country, so that when Saul's last struggle with the Philistines took place, David and his men were not in the Israelite ranks.

Evaluation: First Steps Toward Monarchy

Most high school students are not aware of the fact that Israel had any other form of government besides kingship. From their previous Sunday School training they know that Saul, David and Solomon were kings. But they often think that Moses and the judges acted as monarchs as well. For this reason, it is important to review the other forms of political structure so that the advent of monarchical rule may be seen in its proper context.

The Old Testament presents two different accounts of the establishment of a monarchy. The teacher may want to devote one entire class lesson to a comparison of these sources. It is

recommended that the students mark their Bibles to indicate both sources prior to the class lesson. Once that is done, class discussion may commence. One useful tool in getting at the significance of the monarchy in the light of Israel's past history is to have the class divide into two groups to debate the two theories. This method takes quite a bit of preparation for the teacher as well as for the student, but the results are well worth the added effort. It must always be kept in mind, however, that whatever method is used, the teacher must suit his approach to the level of the class and the nature of the material. It is also the job of the individual instructor to assess the relative importance of the material and to present it to the class in the manner and form which best suits his own pedagogical method and approach.

One key to understanding the real conflict between these two sources is found as one recalls that Israel's history points to Yahweh's authority as Lord over Israel. The meaning of the Sinai event for Israel lay in the relationship established between Yahweh and His chosen people. Recalling that Israel's covenant was based on the Hittite treaty, we remember that Yahweh was Israel's suzerain and that her responsibility was to be an obedient vassal. The contention of the old tribal league and the Levitical priests against the establishment of a monarchical rule was based on this covenantal theology which asserted that Yahweh alone was Israel's suzerain and that a king would, by definition, usurp powers which belonged only to Yahweh. In contrast to this we see that the historical situation in which Israel found herself in the thirteenth century could be met only as she centralized her tribal units.

The Promonarchical tradition saw the monarchy as a divinely ordained blessing and salvation for Israel. While the issue is raised in the anointing of Saul as Israel's chief charismatic figure, it is not fully developed until the reign of David.

When introducing the section on the cultic centers at Shechem/Shiloh and Hebron, it is recommended that the teacher review the importance of worship and obedience in Israel's history. If time permits, this juncture seems a good place to review the section in this guide on Israel's religion (cf. above p. 19 ff.). So that the class will be able to connect the significance of the cultic centers with Israel's past history, the teacher may want to mention that worship after the Sinai events was always seen in terms of the demands of the covenantal relationship and what that meant in Israel's life.

Finally, with regard to Saul and his rule over Israel, it may be emphasized that as a king, Saul did little to affect the state of the confederacies. The tribes were still independent units and because of their loose structure, it was certainly difficult for Saul to build up a dependable body of fighting men. It was really only after the gravity of the Philistine danger was assessed and after David had established a single cultic center at Jerusalem that Israel moved with the force that she did.

IV. United Kingdom and Divided Monarchy

A. David

Reading:

David mourns the death of Saul and Jonathan: II Samuel 1
David becomes king at Hebron: II Samuel 2:1-11
David becomes king at Jerusalem: II Samuel 5:1-12
The bringing of the Ark to Jerusalem: II Samuel 6:1-19
The establishment of a Davidic dynasty: II Samuel 7:1-17
David's weaknesses shown: II Samuel 11:1 - 12:25
Absalom's revolt: II Samuel 15:1-6, 10-15, 30-34
The battle in the forest of Ephraim and the death of
Absalom: II Samuel 18:1 - 19:8
The death of David: I Kings 2:1-4, 10-12
Chronicles, Number 18

Sources:

B.W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, pp. 122-143
J. Bright, The History of Israel, pp. 174-190
H.H. Guthrie, Jr., God and History in the Old Testament,
pp. 20-26
H.H. Guthrie, Jr., Israel's Sacred Songs, pp. 59-117
G. Von Rad, Old Testament Theology, Vol. I., pp. 36-68,
306-324
T. Tompkins, "When David Heard that Absalom was Slain,"
(Vanguard Recording, BGS-5031)

Saul's death left Israel at the mercy of the Philistines. Their victory at Mt. Gilboa was decisive. The Israelite armies were dispersed and Saul's decapitated body was left on the walls of the Philistine fortress of Beth-shan. The victors now had command of the area stretching from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan Valley.

The story of David's early career is interwoven with the fateful events of Saul's reign. After slaying the Amalekite who claimed to have taken Saul's life, and publicly mourning the leader's death, David returned from exile and established his headquarters at the southern cultic center of Hebron. There he was proclaimed king over Judah.

David was particularly shrewd in his maneuvers toward the house of Saul. By a skillful political strategem, he allowed Ishbaal, the sole surviving son of Saul, to set up a small kingdom at the east side of the Jordan. Following a series of internal plunders involving the deaths of Saul's general Abner and Ishbaal, the northern king, David exercised retributive measures against the murderers, thus clearing the way for him to become king of united Israel, with no serious contenders and no costly political indebtedness. Having consolidated his own alliances in the south, David received the elders from the north who claimed him king at Hebron.

With the support of all the Israelite tribes, David moved rapidly to cement the kingdom. Realizing that there still remained a few cities which were not under his rule, particularly the non-Hebrew city of Jerusalem, David set out to capture that strategically located Jebusite fortress, and to transfer his capital there. The political ingenuity of the move to Jerusalem is almost incalculable. It was a neutral site that had no previous connection with any of the tribes. The loyalties of Israel could be fastened upon David and the new political order, bypassing sectional jealousies and old tribal ties. Furthermore, the capture of Jerusalem was entirely David's private affair, giving it a special constitutional status as the "city of David."

The new king launched a building program to fortify the city and to outfit it as his royal seat. He erected a palace and assembled wives and concubines which at that time was an accepted symbol of prestige. David's next move was to bring the ark to Jerusalem, making his city what Shechem and Shiloh had been for

the older tribal confederation: the central cultic shrine. Jerusalem had been a former Canaanite city-state and we may imagine that the older traditions of Israel viewed that city with suspicion. By placing the Ark at rest in Jerusalem, Israel could say, as she had said in the past, that Yahweh was the One who controlled the cosmos, the council of the gods, and Israel.

From another point of view, David's action in moving the Ark to Jerusalem established a continuity between Israel's old central sanctuary and her new one. The presence of the Ark in Jerusalem also validated David's claim to the throne in the eyes of the older traditions. Moreover, the account in II Samuel 7 of the bringing of the Ark is not simply to be regarded as an event which happened once and for all, but a ceremonial guide for the annual re-enactment of that festival. Psalms 24 and 132 supply us with material to reconstruct this festival, since they tell of the events celebrated annually by a great procession.

By a succession of victorious campaigns, David further strengthened the position of his kingdom. The Philistines had already been quelled. East of the Dead Sea, the Moabites were subdued. A campaign against Ammon proved difficult, but when their allies, the Arameans, were defeated, the Ammonite capital was taken as well. Victory over the Edomites gave access to the Red Sea and also to important mineral resources. Further operations were undertaken against the Arameans and as a result David received tribute from Damascus and the area beyond. Amicable relations were also established with Phoenicia, a link which was to prove important in Solomon's reign and in the later history of Israel.

David's monarchy received direct sanction through Nathan, the court prophet. This tradition has past echoes in Egyptian court records. These texts record similar courtly ceremonials: the king's intention to build a temple, a declaration of the filial role between the king and the god, and an endorsement of the king's rule. However similar these forms may have been to II Samuel 7, Israel's interpretation of the relationship of the monarch to Yahweh was of a different nature. When the Israelites reinterpreted the Egyptian custom of handing the monarch the documents of his office, they understood those documents to be none other than the covenant itself! Interpreted in that light, it is not surprising for us to read in II Samuel 7 that Nathan instructed David that Yahweh would "make for (David) a great name" and that David would be his son. The texts of this promise are a collection of different conceptions (promise to David, to David's posterity and to the whole people of God). We note here the skillful pun on the word "house" in II Samuel 7:11 which means not only a house in the sense of temple or palace, but also a dynasty in the sense of family rule. Psalm 89:19-37 records similar material, though the psalm is later than the Davidic era.

Thus far we have seen a picture of David which presents him as a statesman par excellence, the political father of his people. The Court History found in II Samuel 9 - 20, I Kings 1, 2, however, presents, in contrast, a picture of David as unsuccessful father and gradually failing leader. At the heart of his domestic weakness was an indulgent nature, seen particularly in his relationship with Bathsheba and Uriah. David's effort to dis-

guise his impregnation of Bathsheba runs against the adamant fidelity of Uriah who would not go down to his own house as long as the army and the Ark were camped in battle. Uriah's integrity cost him his life, for the king had him killed at the next opportunity. David's sense of guilt is acknowledged to Nathan. By devising parabolically a case of injustice of the sort that David was in the habit of judging, Nathan forced the king to pass sentence upon himself.

In the rest of the Court History we see how this incident set off a chain reaction of troubles as David's lust and murder corrupted his own sons. First off, the fruit of David and Bathsheba's illicit love died. Ammon raped his half-sister Tamar. Absalom assassinated Ammon in revenge. Estranged from his father, Absalom prompted a revolt and to the great sorrow of David was killed at the hand of the king's general Joab. At the end of David's career his sons were engaged in intrigue and treachery over the succession to the throne. Thus the prophecy of Nathan came to dreadful fulfillment: "Behold I will raise up evil against you out of your own house" (II Samuel 12:11).

With uncompromising realism, the court historian paints a picture of the Davidic dynasty which is in no wise romantic or partisan. Indeed, the historian sees through David's astuteness to the flaw in his character which endangered the success of the dynasty more than once. The stories about David run the gamut of love and hate, intrigue, ambition and tests of loyalty. The major question raised by the historian is not David's sexual sin, but his ruthlessness with the exercise of power that allowed him to treat persons as expendable. The importance of the court

history lies in the fact that it reports the events surrounding David's reign with straightforward accuracy and uncompromising honesty. The historian's record is not without an element of majesty, even in its pathos. With all of David's faults candidly exposed, we are nonetheless impressed by the epic proportions of the hero.

To say that the historian was wholly objective, however, is to miss the point of his narrative which has a definite theological bias. We read, for example, that because of David's sin with Bathsheba, Yahweh was displeased with the king. The story goes on to say that David and Bathsheba had a second child, Solomon, and that he was loved by Yahweh. What these passages are saying is that God has passed judgment upon David, more especially upon his progeny. This judgment furthermore, is given without explanation. We are not told why God loved Solomon or, later on, why he wished evil upon Absalom. What the historian wants us to see is that Yahweh intervenes in history to avert danger to his throne -- that "God is working his purpose out." Moreover, Yahweh's intervention on behalf of the Davidic dynasty stands without any record of miracle or supernatural event as in the Exodus story. This is a secular history, a history in which Yahweh's actions are seen by those who have "eyes to see."

One final word must be added about the significance of Jerusalem, "the stronghold of Zion." We have said above that Jerusalem had been a Canaanite city-state and that a religious tradition was present there prior to its capture by David. One segment of that religious tradition states that there was a mountain in the north, associated with the Jerusalem tradition, from which

one could see into the council of the gods. By a process of adaptation, Israel connected Jerusalem or Zion with that mountain in the north. The temple which stood in that place was regarded as the earthly counterpart of the temple in the heavens. From this temple the chief god presided over the divine council and ruled over the cosmos.

By capturing Jerusalem and moving the Ark there, David brought Israel into the cosmic world. No longer could the Israelites define themselves in terms apart from the political order as they had done in the past. The Israelites were no longer rebels from the established order. They were fully members of the political state and as such they had to define themselves in terms of that state. The question which arose then was the relationship of their God to that political state and to the other gods who had ruled from that holy mountain. By capturing Jerusalem David established a link with the prevailing religious tradition of that former Canaanite city-state. Yahweh was acclaimed the cosmic king who ruled from the stronghold of Zion, from the mountain in the north. Yahweh was the conquering leader of the divine council. David's victory over the Jebusite fortress was interpreted as Yahweh's victory over the powers of death and chaos. The traditions about a divine king who ruled from Zion were now transferred to Yahweh, the ruler of the pantheon.

Evaluation: David

The unit on David and the united Monarchy is perhaps the most difficult for anyone to teach. Mass media, Bible comic strips and Sunday School illustrations have so distorted the

person and office of the king that much of the teacher's time will be spent on tearing down preconceived images of David. This unit is indeed a challenge for any educator.

The job of the teacher is to place the Monarchy and David in their correct historical perspective. Emphasis may be placed upon the culture of which Israel was a part at the time of David to clear up some of the inconsistencies surrounding Israel's "hero." A detailed examination of the narrative in the Court History may also help to clear the students' minds of the romanticism built around David.

This approach was used with the students at Saint Anne's, but the results were not the ones expected. The class came to realize the importance of the monarchy in Israel's history, but that insight did not really solve the central problem they had with the events surrounding David's private life. The question which arose over and over was this: "Why did God allow David to remain as king after his illicit relationship with Bathsheba?" This basic question of morality and ethics had been raised once before in the birthright story of Jacob and Esau, but obviously the discussion did not produce a suitable or meaningful answer for the class. Because the high school student has a very individualistic and temporal view of morality and ethics, it is difficult for them to see David's sin in its total perspective.

One way of getting at this problem is to emphasize the point that David was, in fact, punished for his sin. The child born to David and Bathsheba did not live, nor were his other sons a picture of pristine virtue. While David's reign is marked by military conquest and a united monarchy, there is little unity

within his own house. It is not the Philistines nor the Moabites which caused David's kingdom to quaver, but his own flesh and blood.

These remarks, however, may not get at the real answer to the problem. We read in II Samuel 7 that Yahweh promised to raise a house for David which would be continued by his offspring. Unlike Saul's kingship, which disappeared with Saul's death, David was promised that Yahweh intended to give his house permanence, and that he would regard David's descendants as his sons. This promise must be seen in its wider context of the promise of God to Israel, which expressed a new demonstration of the gracious attitude of God to his people and their king. The events of David's reign, more especially those narrated by the court historian must be seen as part of a wider historical context. The account of the Davidic dynasty no longer rests solely upon the historical facts as such, but upon the total salvation history of which they were a part. The complex of events rested in a revelation of divine salvation in which the initiator was Israel's God, Yahweh.

If time permits, the teacher may also mention psalms which reflect the theology of this era. A discussion of the royal psalms may be assigned to the more advanced students for added credit. A detailed exposition of these psalms is found in Israel's Sacred Songs by H.H. Guthrie, Jr., chapters two and three.

B. Solomon

Reading:

Solomon's attainment of the kingship: I Kings 1

The king's wisdom: I Kings 3
The Organization of Solomon's kingdom: I Kings 4:20-34
Solomon's Temple: I Kings 5
The visit of the Queen of Sheba: I Kings 10:1-13
Solomon's weakness: I Kings 11:1-13, 41-43
Chronicles, Number 19

Sources:

B.W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, pp. 143-153
J. Bright, A History of Israel, pp. 190-208
E.H. Maly, The World of David and Solomon
M. Noth, The History of Israel, pp. 204-224

The court history of David concludes with an account of the events which led Solomon to power. Normally Solomon would not have succeeded to the throne. The next in line, after Absalom, was Adonijah, who had won support of two of the most powerful men in David's kingdom -- Joab, the commander of the army and Abiathar, the priest who had been with the king since his early days as an outlaw. But the right of the eldest son to succeed to the throne had not yet been established in Israel. It was the right of the king to make appointment from among all his sons. Adonijah, in gathering to his cause, "all the men of Judah," was attempting to make capital out of the old tribal lines of division.

Meanwhile, another party was at work to declare Solomon king of the united kingdom. This party consisted of Zadok, the priest, Benaiah, the captain of David's personal army, Nathan, David's court prophet and Bathsheba, David's wife and Solomon's mother. Through the efforts of Bathsheba and by Nathan's prompting the queen approached David on his death bed, reminding him of the oath which he swore to her that Solomon should be king and informing him of Adonijah's planned treason. Nathan also approached the king, confirming Bathsheba's story. David had

no choice in his weakened state but to declare Solomon his successor. Zadok, Benaiah and Nathan carried out the king's orders and Solomon was anointed king by Zadok at Gihon. Hearing the news, Adonijah sought the sanctuary of the altar. It was not long before Solomon, now king, found opportunity to do away with Adonijah. Solomon had orders from David to do away with Joab, and he proceeded quickly to carry them out. Abithar was banished to Anathoth. By the right of succession and ruthless removal of possible claimants, Solomon became ruler of all Israel.

Solomon received from David a kingdom of enormous size, about 400 miles from entrance of Hamath to the Gulf of 'Aqaba. Through astute administration, state monopolies and an extensive forced-labor policy, Solomon brought to his capital at Jerusalem power and wealth beyond that achieved by David. Solomon strengthened his international ties, partly through diplomatic marriages. He divided the country into twelve administrative districts under twelve officers. Descendants of the Canaanites were made state slaves and a levy of forced labor was drawn from the Israelites. This free labor was used in Solomon's building activities in Jerusalem, and in other cities.

The glory of Solomon's kingdom was symbolized in part by his palace. But above all it was evident in the Temple, overlaid with gold and decorated with rich furnishings. Its decorative motifs and general plan have numerous parallels in other architecture of the time. The significance of its symbolism and that of the two free standing pillars in front of the porch may have been representative of the mountain supports of the cosmos.

The building itself consisted first of a vestibule, then the "Holy Place" or main sanctuary. Just beyond that was a small raised room, the Holy of Holies. It was lined with cedar and having no windows, was pitch dark. In it were two huge cherubim beneath which stood the Ark of the Covenant. The Temple was built by Phoenicians who knew nothing of Yahwism. Since its construction followed Phoenician models, much of the symbolism reflected pagan culture. We can only guess that Israel's officials saw these pagan influences as symbols of Yahweh's cosmic rule. The Temple cult, whatever it borrowed, remained thoroughly Israelite in character and exerted a conservative influence in the later life of Judah.

Solomon's glory extended to the realm of culture as well. While we have no existing official records of Solomon's reign, we have a digest of them mentioned in I Kings 11:41. This era produced a wealth of historical literature, an example of which is the matchless Court History of David mentioned in the preceding unit. The Yahwist document, too, was shaped during this period.

As the Temple cult stood at the center of Solomon's reign, we may believe that music and psalmody likewise flourished. Under Phoenician influence, psalms of Canaanite origin, e.g., Ps. 29, 45, 18 were adapted for Israelite use. Many of the songs known as royal and enthronement psalms were most likely produced during this period. We may also assume that Israel's wisdom tradition began to flourish at this time. The incident in I Kings 3 depicts Solomon as a wise man. The clue to Solomon's wisdom is found in the narrative which precedes the story of the two women. First of all we read that God appeared to Solomon in a

dream. This in itself is significant for we know that dreams were recognized as a mode of divine communication. In his dream at Gibeon, Solomon asked for wisdom to discern right from wrong and to administer justice. The wisdom intended here was practical wisdom or what we might call "common sense." At one level wisdom is seen in intelligence or shrewdness. At the next it is good sense, sound judgment and moral understanding. At the third level it is the capacity to consider the profounder problems of human life. Solomon's career as king shows traces of all three levels of wisdom, though not in any measure of consistency.

Solomon's rule, however, was not without its problems. He was bent on putting his nation on an equal footing with the most advanced civilization. To that end he encouraged ostentation and luxury. The relatively modest constructions of David were exceeded by Solomon's lavish projects. These building activities required an enormous labor force which Solomon secured by a system of forced labor from among the non-Israelite population of the Canaanite city-states. Although great wealth passed through Solomon's hands, it was spent largely on lavish buildings and court luxury. To pay for these expenditures, the king introduced a comprehensive system of taxation. To implement this system, Solomon divided his kingdom into twelve units, each headed by an officer in charge of collecting the royal levy. While these units sometimes coincided with the old tribal areas, more often tribal boundaries were disregarded. No move could have been better designed to destroy the fading remnants of tribal independence.

It was not long, however, before Israel was to revolt against the burden of enforced labor and taxation. The leader of the revolt was Jeroboam, a northern tribesman from Ephraim. As an overseer of one of Solomon's forced labor camps, Jeroboam was aware of the resentment this system evoked among the people. With the prompting of the northern prophet Ahijah, he attempts a revolt but his efforts are quelled. Jeroboam flees to Egypt, received protection from Shishak, king of Egypt. However legendary the stories about Ahijah may be, they illustrate the presence of an anti-Davidic, anti-southern tradition in the period of a united kingdom.

Evaluation: Solomon

The historical events which took place in the reign of Solomon occasioned great changes in the Israelites' conditions of life. No longer was Israel concerned with self-preservation; she enjoyed the advantage of living in a state which was not only powerful but also well governed. In describing Solomon's rule, one student aptly remarked that at almost every level Israel's material life had the characteristics of a modern day "big business." The analogy was pursued and surprisingly every student was able to find evidence from the text to support that thesis: temple, palace complex, chariots, horses, "chariot cities", a fleet of ships, copper refinery and control of commerce. While it appeared that Solomon only took advantage of the alliances which David had begun, the class was convinced that Solomon certainly capitalized and extended the strength from the Davidic reign.

This analogy was carried further into the area of religious developments. It was at that point that Solomon's era was seen as one of religious syncretism. The amalgamation of alien elements brought radical changes in the character of Israel's life. Since it was a matter of courtesy for the king to erect a sanctuary for a foreign wife that she might worship her own god, Solomon filled Jerusalem with shrines to all kinds of deities. This religious latitudinarianism was an offense to the more strictly religious element in the kingdom, and it is said to have been one of the causes for the disruption of the realm. Israel was not marked out to be a great nation, but rather a covenantal people. It was exceedingly difficult for Israel to remain faithful in the cross current of Canaan where the worship of pagan gods presented a continual temptation. Indeed, one student commented that because Solomon was religiously broad-minded, Yahweh was forced to step in and act as Israel's "trust buster." Solomon's empire was kept intact until his death, however, not because of his own wisdom or power, but because Yahweh had deferred the punishment for David's sake.

C. Israel and Judah

Reading:

The divided kingdom: I Kings 12
Exegesis of I Kings 12, Interpreter's Bible, Vol. 3,
pp. 111-119
Chronicles, Number 20

Sources:

B.W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, pp. 190-195
J. Bright, A History of Israel, pp. 209-220
M. Noth, The History of Israel, pp. 225-250

At the death of Solomon, Rehoboam his son was acclaimed king of Judah at Jerusalem. At the beginning of I Kings 12 Rehoboam went to Shechem, the ancient cultic center associated with Abraham, Joseph and Joshua to receive the ratification of his kingship from the northern tribes. Rehoboam had been accepted by the southern tribes in Jerusalem as king over Judah, but since the monarchy was a dual one, he had to be received by the northern tribes as well. Rehoboam was greeted at Shechem by two political factions: the old Israel, represented by the tribal elders, and the younger men. Rehoboam apparently did not understand the gravity of the claims laid upon him as the successor of Solomon. The innovations of the late king had been met with considerable resentment, not the least of which was his system of taxation and enforced labor for the building of the temple and palaces. The tribes of Israel, remembering all too well the burden of Solomon's reign, demanded that their yoke be lightened. Rehoboam dismissed their plea, and followed the advice of the younger "progressive" party by saying that his father had chastised them with whips, but that he would chastise them with scorpions. For the ~~nor~~thern tribes, that was the last straw. Under the leadership of Jeroboam, Israel raised the same battle cry it had at the time of Sheba's revolt, when its rights had been bypassed by the Jerusalem throne:

"What portion have we in David?
We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse,
To your tents, O Israel!
Look now to your own house, David." (I Kings 12:16)

Rehoboam sent Adoram, taskmaster over the forced labor, into Israel, but he was stoned to death. Rehoboam fled to Jerusalem

for safety and Jeroboam was acclaimed king over the northern tribes at Shechem. The revolt of Israel against Solomon's successor marked the end of the Davidic Empire.

In order to insure a unity among the tribes of Israel, Jeroboam established Shechem as the central ~~cultic~~^{political} center. He also devised other means of cultic celebration. As David had unified his kingdom by bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, Jeroboam also sought to provide a religious basis for his kingdom. He established two cultic centers, one at Bethel and the other at Dan. He also fortified his capital at Shechem and built up a fortress at Penuel.

It is significant that Jeroboam singled out the cities of Shechem, Penuel and Bethel as centers for his kingdom. Shechem was the center of the old tribal confederacy. Jacob and his sons had settled there; Joseph was buried in the vicinity, and the sacred oak of Moriah associated with Abram was probably found there. Shechem had been hallowed by pilgrimages there for covenant renewal (Joshua 24). Thus Jeroboam's decision to make Shechem the capital rested upon his determination to reaffirm the sacral traditions of the northern tribes.

The same considerations prompted Jeroboam's other building activities and religious reforms. Penuel was a spot held sacred by the descendants of Jacob, for it was at that place that the patriarch wrestled with the angel who changed Jacob's name to Israel (Genesis 32). Bethel was the site of Jacob's dream, where he erected a pillar and made a solemn vow to Yahweh (Genesis 28, 35). It lay on the southern border of the tribe of Ephraim and was selected by Jeroboam as the site for a rival sanctuary

to Jerusalem. The erection of the golden bull there was probably another step in Jeroboam's reform of Israel's worship. The bull was not an image of Yahweh, but the pedestal upon which Yahweh could take his stand. Jeroboam's choice, however, was a fateful one. It was virtually impossible for such a symbol to remain a testimony to the God of the covenant. Yahweh could easily assume the attributes of the fertility deities of Canaan with such a symbol.

Not among the least important of the factors contributing to the disruption of the united monarchy was the desire of many religious leaders to reactivate the old amphictyonic traditions. Ahijah, the prophet who prompted Jeroboam, stood in the tradition which favored Samuel over Saul when he encouraged Jeroboam to act in response to Yahweh's will (I Kings 11:29-39). For Ahijah, the claim of the Davidic house to rule forever was not the guide in the selection of the new king. Instead, the restoration of the amphictyonic policy of selection by charismatic gift was preferred. This action indicates that part of the religious leadership still stood in the tradition of Samuel, who saw in kingship itself something of a violation of Yahweh's covenant with his people. Therefore, they reacted against one who had introduced forms of worship against the will of Yahweh. David could be endured, perhaps, but Solomon was an affront to their religious sensitivity. Out of this deep dissatisfaction with the kingdom as it had developed the responsible religious leaders desired to return to the former amphictyony. Following the revolt of the northern tribes, Israel struggled unsuccessfully to recapture the ideal of charismatic rule, while the southern

tribes strengthened the rule of David's dynasty. Thus, both north and south went their own ways. The political unit, so arduously achieved and difficultly maintained under Saul, David and Solomon was gone forever.

Following the division, the Deuteronomic historian (whom we believe wrote the books of the Kings) tells the story of both Israel and Judah, but he is prejudiced in favor of Judah. Using the records of the two kingdoms, he weaves them together, following a definite pattern in presenting the kings of both nations. The introduction for each of the kings of Israel includes:

(1) the dating of the king's reign in terms of the reigning king of Judah, (2) the name of the capital from which he reigned, (3) the duration of the reign, and (4) a brief and condemning characterization of the king. Four items also appear in the introduction of the kings of Judah: (1) the date of accession in terms of who is king of Israel, (2) the age at which the king came to the throne, (3) the name of the queen mother, and (4) a brief comparison of each king with David.

The historian's concern was not to give a complete resume of the histories of either Judah or Israel. The Deuteronomic writer recounted the history in such a way as to demonstrate a central conviction: infidelity to Yahweh brings destruction to both Israel and Judah. This premise had special application to Israel. Her revolt as the rejection of the Yahweh cult which centered in the temple of Jerusalem expressed the epitome of infidelity according to the thinking of the Deuteronomist. Jeroboam was the prime culprit, and none of the Israelite kings after him received wholehearted endorsement of the historian. A

V. The Ninth Century

A. Introduction to the Prophetic Movement

Reading:

Elijah and Elisha stories: I Kings 16:29 - 19:21,
21:1-21, II Kings 2:1-15

Sources:

- B.W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament,
pp. 183-188, 201-215
J. Bright, A History of Israel, pp. 227-234
H.E.W. Fosbroke, "The Prophetic Literature," The
Interpreter's Bible, Vol I., pp. 201-211
H.H. Guthrie, Jr., God and History in the Old
Testament, pp. 40-58, 67-73
F. Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, "The Elijah"
B.D. Napier, "Prophet, Prophetism, The Interpreter's
Dictionary of the Bible, Vol. 3, pp. 896-919
J. Pritchard, "The Journey of Wen-Amon to Phoenicia,"
The Ancient Near East, pp. 16-24
G. von Rad, Old Testament Theology, Vol. 2, pp. 3-98

In its broadest sense, prophetism is simply a particular way of looking at history. The meaning of history, from the Biblical point of view, is to be found in terms of God's purpose and participation in history. Prophetism can be conceived of as including far more than the word of an individual prophet who delivers the word that he received. It is the content of this word, that particular way of looking at history, which sees history as controlled and dominated by the purposes and plans of Yahweh.

More narrowly defined, the exercise of prophetism is the function of a particular group of men, including Elijah and Elisha and the men for whom books in the Old Testament were named. The office of a prophet has a long and intricate history in both Israel and in non-Hebraic cultures. Although

the categories overlap, prophetism can be considered in terms of the following basic types: (1) seer or ecstatic, (2) covenant mediator, (3) court prophet, and (4) cult prophet.

Several words are used in the Old Testament to describe the prophet. The most important of these are ro'eh, "seer;" hazeh, "seer" or "visionary;" and nabhi, "spokesman." The first two of these words are derived from verb forms which mean "to see, gaze, stare, behold visions." The classical reference for ro'eh occurs in I Samuel 9:9:

"Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he said, 'Come, let us go to the seer (ro'eh);' for he who is now called a prophet (nabhi) was formerly called a seer (ro'eh)."

While we may presume that after Samuel the term "seer" fell into disuse and was replaced by the term "spokesman," the terms really may not be equated on the basis of that evidence. What we can say, however, is that in later prophetic writings, the word "prophet" is parallel to the word "seer."

The most frequent word for prophet is nabhi, generally connected with the Akkadian word nabû, "to call, to announce, or to speak forth" and thus "to speak forth, declare." If the word is taken in the active sense, the nabhi is "one who announces, or if the form is taken as passive, "one who has been called." The prophets of Israel were "called" of Yahweh to "announce" his word. The clearest illustration of what the Old Testament means by nabhi is found in Exodus 7:1:

"And the LORD said to Moses, 'See, I make you as God to Pharaoh; and Aaron your brother shall be your nabhi' (spokesman)."

Prophetism may have had its origin in the agitated behavior of the ecstatic prophet who appeared to rave as the inspirational frenzy overtook him. The ecstatic prophet was not essentially different in function from the seer, except that he was associated with a group of roving ecstasies. Saul, the young Israelite, seeking information about the lost asses of his father, came to Samuel, the seer. After supplying information about the whereabouts of the lost animals, Samuel arranged for Saul to meet a band of ecstatic prophets. When Saul met the prophetic band, "the spirit of God came mightily upon him, and he prophesied among them" (I Samuel 10:10).

Ecstatic prophecy did not originate with the Israelites, however. Prophetic figures of many types were found throughout the Mediterranean world. Sacred texts from Mesopotamia mention a group of priests whose function was the pronouncement of oracular words from the deity. Working alongside them was another group whose characteristic was the ecstatic trance. Their function was to achieve a trance state in which their minds had gone forth to be replaced by the spirit of God. The trance was induced by raving frenzy; oracles spoken from this ecstatic state were considered the very word of the deity. These ecstasies were organized into prophetic guilds, the members of which were called "sons."

Canaan also had prophetic guilds. In fact, ecstatic prophecy is more characteristic of Canaanite religion than of any other. We note here the source reference to "The

Journey of Men-Amon to Phoenicia" in which the Egyptian describes his adventures in the Canaanite city of Byblos, where he happens upon a boy seized by ecstatic frenzy. This type of ecstasy was also characteristic of the prophets of Baal whom Elijah met on Mount Carmel (I Kings 17ff).

We find a kind of ecstatic prophecy in extrabiblical sources as well. The Metamorphoses of Apuleius (The Golden Ass), a second century romance, gives an account of a strange group of men who attend a Syrian goddess. Characteristic of this group, and of other ecstasies, is the frantic dancing, howling, shouting and self-inflicted wounds. Further knowledge of group ecstasy is found in the worship of Dionysus in the celebration of the Bacchus cults.

The earliest prophets of Israel, then, bear a striking resemblance to all of these ecstatic groups. The first bands of them encountered in the books of Samuel can hardly be distinguished from their Near Eastern counterparts. Those prophets often did obtain their "word from Yahweh" in an ecstatic trance, but the content of their message set them apart. The prophetic movement in Israel appears as a radical transformation and refinement of ancient Near Eastern prophetism. The Israelite called by Yahweh to be his spokesman confronted his people with a message of ethical and moral integrity unmatched in the ancient world.

Fundamentally bound up with Israelite prophecy is the function of the prophet as covenant mediator. The figure of Moses in the Exodus tradition is important here because Moses represents the aetiology of some kind of office or function

which existed in Israel. Tradition has connected Moses with the covenant, and has also regarded him as the prototype of Israelite prophecy. At the conclusion of the Book of the Covenant (Exodus 23:20-23) it says that an angel will stand before Israel. The word in Hebrew for angel is the same as that for messenger and a messenger is one who delivers the word of Yahweh. A connection may be drawn here between the messenger and his words. In the case of Moses, the word of Yahweh which he delivers are the words of the covenant, hence, the link between prophecy and covenant renewal in the context of cultic institutions. It was one of the functions of the prophet to stand before the people, as Moses had done in the past, to renew their loyalty to the words of the covenant. This ceremony of renewal, however, was by no means a static cultic institution, nor were the words to which Yahweh's people gave assent always spelled out in the same formula. In Joshua 24 we have one account of such a ceremony. This covenant ratification at Shechem was the one given at Sinai, extended to include tribes not present when the original covenant was made. After the people were assembled at Shechem, a resume of Yahweh's redemptive acts was recited by Joshua. There followed a challenge to decision and response after which came the actual ceremony of covenant renewal.

Joshua's function here as covenant mediator is tied in with his office as judge. The function of the judge in Israel also had a prophet like character. The reader is referred to the discussion of the function of the judges as mediators of the covenant on p. 48 above.

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Joshua's function here as covenant mediator is tied in with his office as judge. The function of the judge in Israel also had a prophet like character. The reader is referred to the discussion of the function of the judges as mediators of the covenant on p. 48 above.

A word must be said at this point about the role of Samuel in Israel's prophetic tradition. We know from the accounts in I Samuel 9 and 10 that Samuel was a seer, prophet and judge. It was his reputation as a well known seer that brought Saul to his house to inquire of him the whereabouts of his father's animals. Apparently, Samuel also had some connection with the prophetic guilds of Israel as I Samuel 10:5-6 illustrates. More important than all of that is, however, the fact that Samuel is depicted as a prophet, as one who delivers a message received from Yahweh. We recall that Samuel anointed Saul as "prince over Israel" (I Samuel 10:1) and that later he revoked that action (I Samuel 15). Whether or not Samuel was a leader of the prophetic movement cannot be established, but we may presume that he was, at least, one of the precursors of the prophets of the later centuries.

After the establishment of the monarchy, we find still another type of prophetism in Israel's history. These were the prophets attached to the royal court whose function it was to give Yahweh's sanction to royal affairs. That the prophets came to the fore in the time of war is an indication of the link between the political and religious spheres in Israel. It was the job of the prophet to predict victory (or defeat) for the king's army. While the court prophets were generally in favor of a monarchical rule, they often exercised the right to criticize the king in the light of Yahweh's law and covenant. Nathan's rebuke of David and Bathsheba is one example of this kind of prophetic function.

Alongside the accounts of the court prophets, we find still another kind of prophetic institution which stood over against the court prophets. Literature from the Mesopotamian kingdom of Mari sheds light on the function of this kind of prophet. Given the ancient Near Eastern conception of the divine assembly ruling the cosmos, it was this prophet's function to deliver messages to the king about the destiny of the divine assembly. The prophet Micaiah ben Imlah (I Kings 22) stands in this tradition as the beginning of a new kind of prophetism. Micaiah, in opposition to both the desires of the king and the view of the majority of prophets, presented the word of Yahweh as he understood it. His message did not support the throne; it spelled out doom and disaster. Micaiah broke the ranks of traditional prophetism. For the first time a prophet of woe stood opposed to the status quo. Moreover, Micaiah represents a first of a series of prophets who received their words by vision into the council of the gods.

As one might suppose, Micaiah, standing against the rest of the prophets, was forced to a much greater extent to articulate the source of his authority to speak for Yahweh. As the tradition of the "classical" prophets increased in importance, so also the problem of authority became more decisive. Thus we have the development of the prophet's formula or messenger formula: "Thus says the LORD," as the true indication of the prophet's right to speak. These prophets conceived of themselves as messengers of Yahweh who were commanded to speak that word as they had received it.

VI. Eighth Century Prophets

A. Revolution of Jehu and the Age of Jeroboam II

Reading:

II Kings 9:1-37, 14:23-39

Sources:

- B.H. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, pp. 216-223
J. Bright, A History of Israel, pp. 231-232, 234-236, 238-244
J. Pritchard, ed., The Ancient Near East, illustrations 100A, 100B

The Jehu dynasty begins in 842 B.C. and extends for about one century. Under the previous reign of the Omriads, the northern kingdom enjoyed a period of political and economic power, despite the efforts of Elijah to purge Israel from her religious apostasy. With the anointing of Jehu by the prophet Elisha, we see the beginnings of a revolt, not only in the political but also in the religious sphere. Jehu capitalized upon the conservative elements which opposed the policy of the Omri house. Whatever we may say about the bloody revolution under Jehu, it did serve to free Israel from an increasing assimilation with pagan practices. However, this revolution left Israel in a weakened state so that she could not hold her own house together, much less defend herself against foreign oppressors.

Jehu's foreign relations were a dismal failure. His revolt broke the alliances which the Omriads had made with Phoenicia and Judah by the murders of Jezebel and Ahaziah. In 841 we read that Jehu paid tribute to Shalmaneser III.

Following a series of politically impotent rulers, one man emerged in Israel who put the kingdom "back in business." Omri, much like David, once leader of the army, gave Israel a strong centralized government, uniting forces around a new cultic center, Samaria. His influence was of such great renown that Tiglath-Pileser III, the Assyrian monarch one hundred years after Omri, designated Israel "Omri-Land." In an attempt to reinforce his power, Omri established a close alliance with the kingdom of Tyre, and fostered the marriage of his son Ahab to Jezebel, the daughter of the king of Tyre.

Ahab succeeded his father to the throne in 869 B.C., but not without opposition from those forces which were initially opposed to the monarchy. As Omri had allied his kingdom with Tyre, politically, Ahab carried the alliance one step further by allowing for the worship of Jezebel's Phoenician god, Baal-Melkart. It was this action which precipitated what is commonly known as the "prophetic revolution." Israel was faced with the choice, verbalized by the prophets, of either exclusive worship of Yahweh or rejection of the Lord as King. There could be no limping in the middle, as the Sam prophets did.

Elijah appears on the scene during the reign of Ahab, shortly after the revolution against the house of Omri. Central to his proclamation was that Israel was called by Yahweh to be faithful to the demands of her covenantal relationship, not to the wiles of a human monarch. It is not insignificant, therefore, that Elijah received his instruction

from the mountain where the Mosaic covenant was first given (Mt. Horeb - northern tradition - E), nor that it was from Horeb that Elisha chose Jehu as king.

The Elijah episode opens in I Kings 17 with mention of rain, apparently referring to the power of the Canaanite or Phoenician god Baal who controlled the rain. A contest is held on Mt. Carmel between the Baal prophets, brought to Samaria at the request of Jezebel, and Elijah, each calling upon his god to bring fire upon the altar. We note in Elijah's remarks to the Baal prophets some of the "sharpest satires on paganism ever penned." The point of the contest was to determine who was Lord, who had the power to control rain and fertility. When the rains came, it was Elijah's Lord who reigned victorious. But the victory at Carmel did not settle matters with the Baal prophets, for Jezebel was still on the throne, as influential as before (II Kings 10:21). The story of Naboth's vineyard explains the just end of Ahab and Jezebel.

Elisha is Elijah's successor as prophet to Israel, receiving from him his mantle as authority of that office. Unlike his predecessor, Elisha is associated with a band of prophets, and yet he stands in Elijah's tradition, not in that of the court prophets. His anointing of Jehu as king of Israel makes it clear that the king's authority and power was given by the prophet, and not the other way around.

Evaluation: The Ninth Century

The concept of prophets and prophecy is difficult for

the high school student to comprehend. At the outset, the class was asked to formulate a collective job description for the prophet. Almost everyone agreed that his primary function was to foretell future events. In order to broaden their perception, we talked at great length about the men we had studied whom they might consider to be prophet like figures. Moses was listed first because he was "a messenger of God." They listed Nathan, David, Solomon, Saul and Elijah, in that order. From this list, and with help from the teacher, we divided prophetism into two types: (1) seer or ecstatic, and (2) covenant mediator. Emphasis was placed on the latter type with particular attention paid to the centrality of history in the covenant renewal. Because the class itself had not rehearsed Israel's history as a regular part of each lesson, it was decided that such a rehearsal might be helpful to counterbalance the "fortune teller aetiology" which the class attributed to prophetism.

The lessons on Elijah, and the other prophets followed much the same pattern. The historical period was established, the Sitz im Leben discussed, and finally the prophet's words analyzed. In the case of Elijah, we reviewed Canaanite religion and the worship of Baals, identified Ahab and Jezebel and then dealt with the record in I Kings. The oratorio "The Elijah" by Mendelssohn was used as the basis of both lessons. It must be pointed out that neither Mendelssohn nor the account in Kings emphasizes the object of the contest between Elijah and the Baalim. The intent of the meeting on Mt. Carmel was to determine who was the one who controlled

rain and fertility. The climax of the story comes in I Kings 18:41-46 where the goal of the contest is realized: Yahweh sends rain and the drought is ended. Once the class understands the point of the story, they will be able to appreciate the second climax of the Mendelssohn work. The accompanying figure of sixteenth notes in ascending and descending arpeggio figures is intended to reinforce the text "Thanks be to God." Mendelssohn skillfully unites text and music to give the listener a sense of being caught in a torrential downpour. It is unfortunate that other musical works are not available to accompany the study of dramatic prophecy.

VI. Eighth Century Prophets

A. Revolution of Jehu and the Age of Jeroboam II

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The Assyrian king on his Black Obelisk presents the first pictures of Israelites that we know. The artist represents Jehu kissing the ground before Shalmaneser.

We do not have much information from the Deuteronomic historian on the reign of Jeroboam II. In spite of this silence, we do know a great deal about his reign from the writings of Amos and Hosea. From certain archeological findings we know that Samaria enjoyed a period of prosperity and cultural achievement. During the reign of Jeroboam II, Israel controlled the trade route from Syria. With the increase of luxury and wealth, Israel's economic classes were divided into two groups: (1) the wealthy merchants, and (2) the impoverished subject peoples. It was to these conditions of luxury and license and to the continued worship of the Baals that Amos spoke.

8. Amos

Reading:

Amos 1:1 - 9:8a

Sources:

- B.W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, pp. 228-237
J. Bright, A History of Israel, pp. 244-248
J.E. Corbett, The Prophets on Main Street, pp. 13-30

Amos lived at the end of this fairly long era of peace and prosperity. Both Jeroboam II in the north and Uzziah in the south had long and successful reigns. Not only did the people enjoy wealth, but many were apparently "religious," paying tithes and offering temple sacrifices. There was an element of corruption in this, however. The poor were oppressed

by the wealthy, law courts were corrupt and religious practices were sometimes reduced to the character of licentious rites.

The message which Amos proclaimed is not to be understood solely in terms of a reproof of Israel. Like his predecessors, Amos stood before Israel as one who gave meaning to the historic events in which Israel now found herself. Amos stood as a representative of the covenant relationship which Yahweh had established with his people in the events of the exodus and Sinai. Amos was the spokesman for Yahweh, declaring that the day of the Lord would come as a day of darkness, not of light. These words of judgment were not heard or understood by those living in the middle of the eighth century. They believed that their prosperity was an indication of God's reward to them for their faithfulness.

Amos was a southerner, a shepherd from Tekoa. His words were directed primarily to the northern kingdom, yet he was concerned for Judah as well. The opening oracles (ch. 1-2) are directed to the small nations that surround Israel, proclaiming Yahweh's sovereignty over them. To Israel's surprise, however, she was also included in the list of those who would be judged for their misdeeds. Amos rehearses the past events in Israel's history to make clear the fact that because Yahweh's people had been given a special destiny, they would also receive a special punishment for their transgressions. Because Israel, having seen the light, had chosen to live in darkness, the day of the Lord would come as darkness and calamity.

Following the oracles which proclaim doom, we read the

same terrible theme in a series of prophetic visions. The plumb line used for construction, shows Israel's warped life and acts to her destruction. The basket of summer fruit becomes the "end upon my people Israel," by a play on the words 'fruit' and 'end' which have the same Hebrew root. The final vision, in which Yahweh stands in the Temple, declares that no one may escape the judgment of the Lord of history.

The message of Amos to Israel rests firmly in a view of history as the arena for God's mighty acts. Israel existed as a nation because God had called her into being as his people. If, by faithlessness to that covenant, Israel would not witness to Yahweh's sovereignty and righteousness, she would witness by standing in judgment and eventual destruction. Israel's only hope against annihilation lay in repentance, in turning from evil to justice and faithfulness. He is, however, less hopeful for Israel than is Hosea.

While Amos does not say specifically who will be Yahweh's agent in this destruction, he probably had the Assyrians in mind. The threat of Tiglath-Pileser III was only a cloud upon the horizon in Amos' time. It is in Hosea that we see the immanence of the Assyrian threat.

C. Hosea

Reading:

Hosea 1:2-9, 2:2-5, 8-20, 3, 4:1-10, 6:1-6, 11:1-11, 14

Sources:

B.W. Anderson, Understanding the Old Testament, pp. 237-251

J. Bright, A History of Israel, pp. 244-248

After the death of Jeroboam II in 746 B.C., Israel meets with disaster. Tiglath-Pileser III (Pul in Biblical accounts) took the Assyrian throne, setting up a military program which led to the eventual conquest of Egypt. Due to the internal problems of the northern kingdom, Israel was in no state to fend off outside aggressors. Assyria's policy of uprooting conquered peoples from their homes and exiling them to parts of Assyria was a fate to await Israel in the not too distant future. While Amos spoke to Israel as a southerner during an era of peace, Hosea spoke as a native to his own people who were faced with an Assyrian war.

Hosea's prophecy begins at the end of the reign of Jeroboam II and extends almost to the fall of Samaria in 721 B.C. Like Amos', Hosea's work contains a compilation of oracles, built around the impending doom at the hands of Assyria. Unlike Amos, Hosea sees this doom with a sense of optimism. Israel will be judged, to be sure, but she may also be forgiven, restored and renewed.

Hosea's marriage to Gomer, described in chs. 1 and 3 is a central theme in his book. Hosea is the first prophet to interpret the covenant relationship in terms of marriage. The husband-wife symbolism is echoed throughout the book, especially in the allusions to Israel's apostasy. Other pictures which illustrate something of the same intimacy are: Israel (Ephraim) as the child, taught to walk, Yahweh's knowledge of Ephraim and Yahweh as healer. The names of Hosea's children stand within this symbolism of marriage and yet give a judg-

ment of Israel in metaphorical language.

Hosea's message then, is two-sided. Israel is being judged because of her political and religious apostasy. She has looked for security in a variety of foreign alliances, and has offered cultic acts as an impure people. Her understanding of God is taken from a Canaanite world-view, and not from an historic covenantal relationship. For these reasons, she stands in judgment before Yahweh.

However central the proclamation of judgment appears in Hosea, it is balanced by a concept of love not found in Amos. Israel's punishment will not be final; she shall be "like the sand of the sea," and again be God's sons. Yahweh shall woo Israel back, renew his covenant with her, and betroth her to himself forever. The utterness of God's judgment is to be seen against the intimate relationship between God and his people. Israel's infidelity will be conquered by a love stronger than hers, and she will finally know Yahweh in a relationship of a new covenant.

D. Decline and Fall of the Northern Kingdom

In spite of the efforts of Amos and Hosea, the course of Israel's history following the reign of Jeroboam II was marked by continual decline. Both prophets denounced the nation's moral decadence, but the growing internal decay rapidly overbalanced the external prosperity achieved by Jeroboam. His death was followed by twenty-four years of continual decay of the social structure and instability of leadership which

spelled disaster for the people of the northern kingdom.

The major political factor in the downfall of Israel was the restoration of Assyrian power. Tiglath-Pileser III came to the throne about the time of Jeroboam II's death, about 746 B.C. He was an extremely capable and energetic ruler. After securing the territory around Assyria, he directed his ambitions toward the west. While Syria and Egypt were his primary targets, Israel's strategic position in the Fertile Crescent made her involvement a foregone conclusion. Tiglath-Pileser was exceedingly successful in his westward march and soon was receiving tribute from most of the states of Syria and northern Palestine. In 732 B.C. Damascus fell to him and Israel's buffer was gone. Now she stood exposed to the direct onslaughts of the Assyrian ruler.

Tiglath-Pileser's control of the west persisted until his death in 727 B.C. Hoshea, who followed Pekah to Israel's throne, took his death as a signal for revolt. Hoshea refused to pay tribute to the new Assyrian monarch, Shalmaneser V, who consequently moved against Israel. Samaria did manage to withstand a three year siege. However, Shalmaneser's successor, Sargon II, was able to destroy both the city and nation in 721 B.C.

Instead of the usual procedure of exacting tribute and demanding allegiance, Sargon deported and dispersed many of the Israelites beyond Mesopotamia. These "displaced persons" were replaced by peoples from other areas of the Assyrian empire. According to the Deuteronomic historian who wrote the narratives in the book of the Kings, the tribes of the

north were lost to the elect nation of Israel. The prophets did plead for a re-identification of the north with the "new Israel," but the fall of Samaria marked the natural end for a revolt born and bred in the spirit of apostasy.

Evaluation: Eighth Century Prophets

These lessons have been written for use by the secondary school teacher. While they have been sometimes quite detailed and at other points scanty, nonetheless their purpose is to aid the teacher who is presented with the task of illuminating the Old Testament narratives for the high school student. However, they are by no means always effective as the following incident will illustrate.

We had just completed the unit on the ninth century prophets. Class discussion had been lively; most of the questions raised by the class pointed to significant issues, particularly those concerning the prophet's calling and his authority. Without further preparation, we moved into the eighth century to investigate Amos and Hosea and the fall of the northern kingdom. One student taught a well organized lesson on the indictment of Israel and her neighbors in the opening chapters of Amos. Because this lesson was well presented and received with understanding, it seemed logical to move to the hopeful passages in Amos 5:14-15 without further elaboration. It was at this point that the gulf between teacher and student became obvious. As the discussion of those passages began, it suddenly became apparent that none of the members of

the class had the faintest idea of what the word 'justice' meant. As one way of attempting to clarify this concept, the class was asked to discuss what was meant by a "just teacher." The answers ranged from "well organized and intelligent" to "fairness and sense of humor," pointing out that the question was obviously the wrong one to ask at that point. While it is true that students can generally come up with the right answer if they are asked the right question, this situation demanded a certain breadth of experience, not academic skill and knowledge. The basic problem here was not so much in the lesson plan as in the lack of academic background and experience of the students. The teacher cannot always take those factors into account when writing units for an academic setting.

Perhaps one of the most illuminating assignments in this unit was the term test (see Appendix) on prophets and prophetism. The students were asked to write a job description for a modern day prophet, constructing a hypothetical situation for which the services of a prophet were desired. The assignment was written in class, primarily for the purpose of seeing how creative the students could be in a limited amount of time. The results were astounding. One girl drew up a want ad in modern calligraphy, two or three wrote short detective stories, and a few described certain individuals whom they felt possessed prophetic qualities. Only two students discussed prophecy in terms of future prediction, which was indeed very satisfying for this teacher.

It is recommended, on the basis of this test, that more

assignments of a creative nature be given. Tests and other evaluative measures requiring factual knowledge may safely be given as homework assignments due to the fact that grade distribution occurs generally on a standard curve. The average student will earn average grades, whether she does her assignments with the help of a library reference shelf, her own class notes or without academic aides.

Finally, it is necessary to present some general reflections on teaching. The teacher's primary task is not to teach facts, as important as they may be. The teacher's first job is to teach students, and that means that the teacher must take time to know his students. This is particularly difficult for the graduate school student teacher for it means that he must leave the library and the term papers to watch a basketball game, chaperone a dance or talk individually with students. While these activities are nowhere printed on an official school contract, they are nonetheless of primary importance. No amount of classroom gymnastics and gimmickery can ever surpass the value of the teacher-student relationship.

This act of teaching implies wisdom and wisdom implies discipline, for the teacher as well as for the student. This means, of course, that the teacher must prepare the lessons thoroughly, preferably a week in advance of the class session to leave sufficient time for reflection. Discipline for the student means that homework assignments must be prepared carefully and delivered on the day that they are due. There is, perhaps, no easier way for a Bible course to earn the label "it's just religion class" than to lighten the yoke of academic

responsibility. The teacher may decide to adjust the assignments to suit the individual student, but that does not eliminate the necessity for maintaining a certain standard of performance.

There are certain more specific considerations to be taken into account when teaching the Old Testament. It is important for the teacher and the class to remember that the course is an academic one, requiring no religious commitment to the subject matter. These lessons were written for an academic course and they require no faith affirmation on the part of those using them. Students often have the idea that the Bible is a "holy" book containing pious phrases and lofty religious concepts. In order to clarify that misunderstanding the teacher may have to place a stronger emphasis on the academic nature of the course.

The teacher may also find that certain non-academic factors will hinder the capable students from grasping the material to its fullest extent. In cases such as these, the teacher can only help the student to see that the Bible may, in fact, be studied by those who are not committed to its basic presuppositions on the nature of man in relation to God.

And finally, it must be said that the experience of teaching a high school Old Testament class is far more profitable for the teacher than for the student. There is no better test of knowledge (or of faith, for that matter) than the discipline of teaching. Like other disciplines, however, teaching requires skills which are acquired only through practical experience. This curriculum guide, written on the

basis of one year's experience, will no doubt require further refinement and elaboration. However, this initial experience has demonstrated that the Old Testament can, in fact, be taught as an academic subject at the secondary school level, and that such teaching is indeed profitable and rewarding.

VII. APPENDIX

O.T.
Miss Shaw
Sept. 16, 1966

ASSIGNMENT FOR WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21:

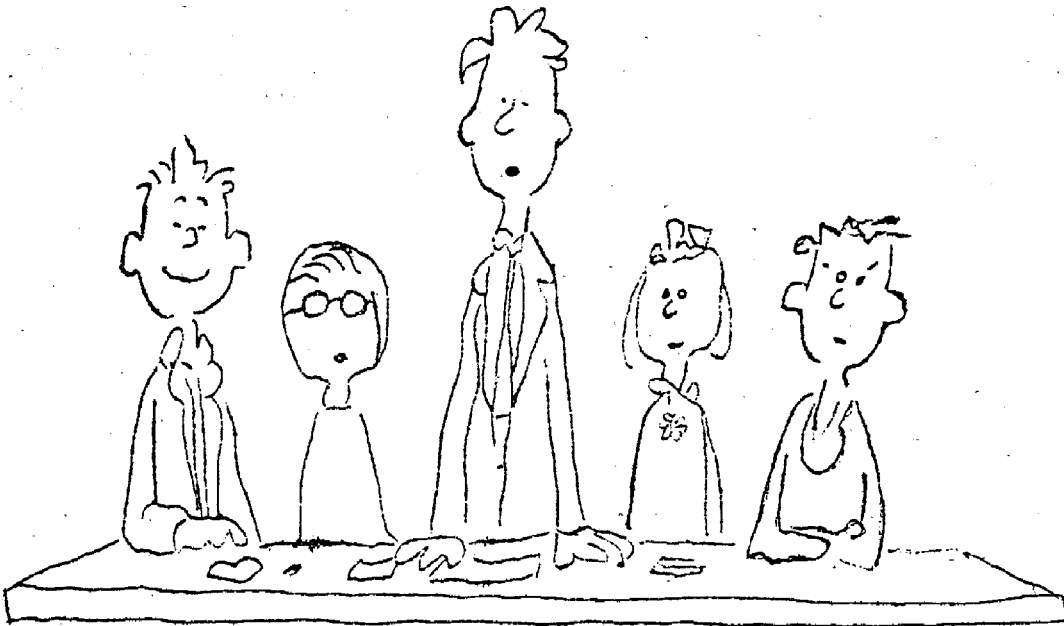
On the map given to you, write in the names of these countries and cities:

Sumer, Akkad, Babylonia, Mesopotamia, Assyria, Mitanni, Babylon, Syria, Cyprus, Arabia, Canaan, Hittite Empire, Ur, Jerusalem, Asia Minor, Egypt, Media, Mari and Elam.

To aid you in this "most difficult task," you will find in the library (on Bible reserve) copies of the Oxford Bible Atlas. The "answers" to this assignment will be found on pp. 54-5. You might also take a look at the other cities on that map and see if any of the names are familiar to you. (if they aren't now, they will be)

These maps will be handed to me in class on Wed. and will be returned to you on Friday for you to keep as reference during further lectures.

shalom

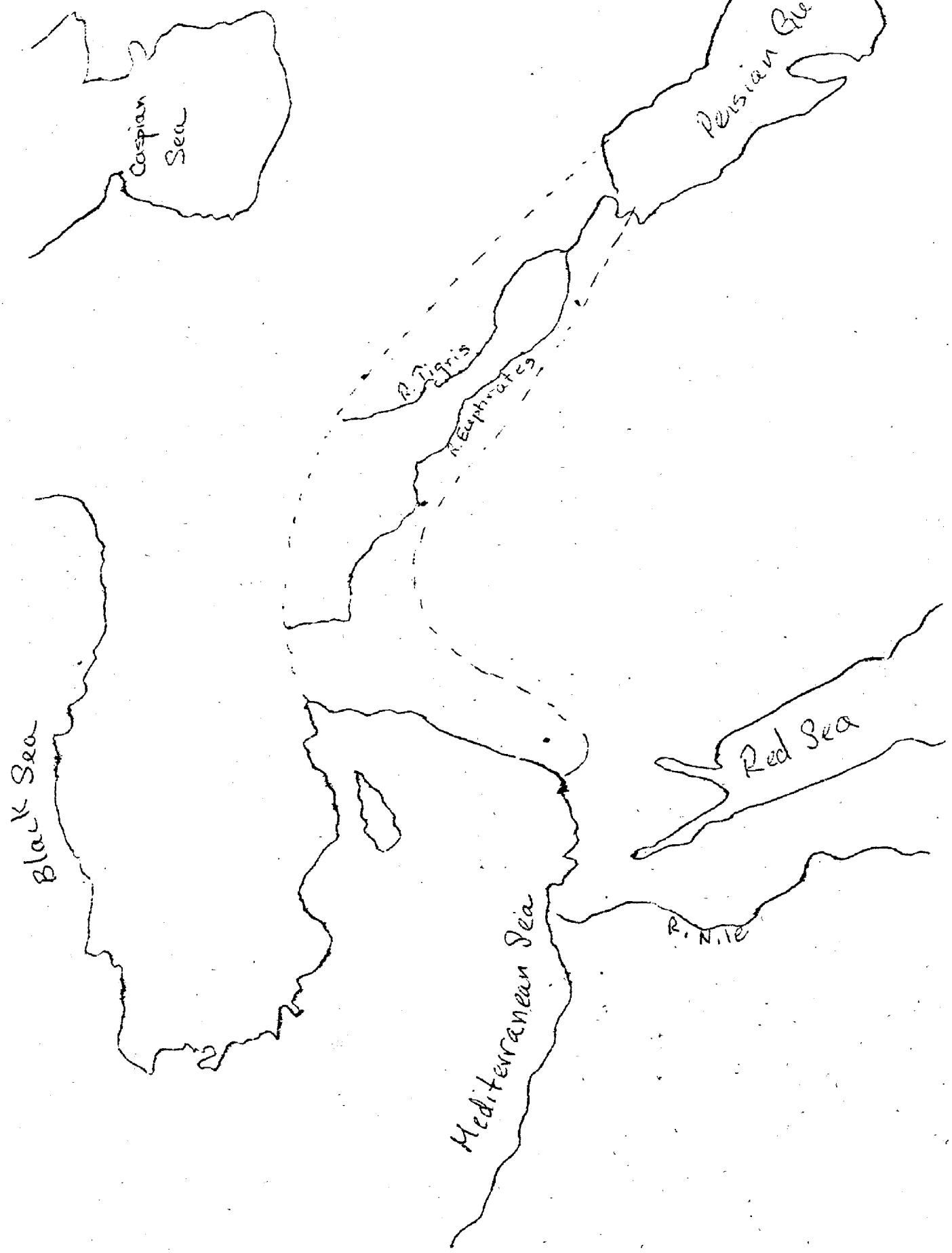


"The topic before the panel tonight is 'What do you think it was that was bugging ol' Pharoah?'"

(by C.M. Schulz,
creator of "Peanuts")

The Ancient Near East Before the Exodus,
Oxford Bible Atlas, pp. 54-55

The Ancient Near East Before the Exodus



--- Fertile Crescent

D.T.
Miss Shaw
Sept. 21, 1966

ASSIGNMENT FOR FRIDAY, SEPT. 23, 1966:

Read the selections from the Enuma elish and the Gilgamesh epic which you have been given.

Read, also the Creation accounts in Genesis:
Gen. 1-2:4a and Gen. 2:4b-2:25

and the Flood accounts:
Gen. 6:9-22; 7:6; 7:11-21; 8-9:17

Would you believe that these accounts are parallel in content?
(they are)

To prepare yourselves for class discussion on Friday, you are to take the Gilgamesh epic, and in the right hand margin, write the corresponding chapter and verse numbers of the Genesis account of the Flood.....e.g.:

6:14 Tear down this house, build a ship!



"I think I've made one of the first steps toward understanding the mysteries of the Old Testament.....I'm starting to read it!"

O.T.
Miss Shaw
Sept. 21, 1966

Enuma elish: the Babylonian story of creation; it was recited in its entirety on the fourth day of the New Year's celebration each year.

"When on high the heaven had not been named,
Firm ground below had not been called by name,
Naught but primordial Apsu, their begetter,
And Mummu-Tiamat, she who bore them all,
Their waters commingling as a single body;
No reed hut had been matted, no marsh land had appeared,
When no gods whatever had been brought into being,
Uncalled by name, their destinies undetermined---
Then it was that the gods were formed within them. ..."

"When Marduk hears the words of the gods,
His heart prompts him to fashion artful works.
Opening his mouth, he addresses Ea
To impart the plan he had conceived in his heart:
'Blood I will mass and cause bones to be.
I will establish a savage, 'man' shall be his name.
Verily, savage-man I will create.
He shall be charged with the service of the gods
That they might be at ease!...'"

Gilgamesh epic: the episode of the Flood represents only one scene in the epic of Gilgamesh, one in which the hero of the Flood, Utnapishtim, recounts the story of how he escaped the general destruction of mankind.

"Man of Shuruppak, son of Ubar-Tutu,
Tear down this house, build a ship!
Give up possessions, seek thou life.
Forswear worldly goods and keep the soul alive!
Aboard the ship take thou the seed of all living things.
The ship that thou shalt build,
Her dimensions shall be to measure.
Equal shall be her width and her length.
Like the Apsu thou shalt ceil her..."

"The little ones carried bitumen,
While the grown ones brought all else that was needful.
On the fifth day I laid her framework.
One whole acre was her floor space,
Ten dozen cubits the height of each of her walls,
Ten dozen cubits each edge of the square deck.
I laid out the contours and joined her together.
I provided her with six decks,
Dividing her thus into seven parts.
Her floor plan I divided into nine parts.
I hammered water-plugs into her.
I saw to the punting-poles and laid in supplies..."

"Bullocks I slaughtered for the people,
And I killed sheep every day,
Must, red wine, oil, and white wine
I gave the workmen to drink, as though river water,
That they might feast as on New Year's Day.
I opened...ointment, applying it to my hand.
On the seventh day the ship was completed.
The launching was very difficult,
So that they had to shift the floor planks above and below,
Until two-thirds of the structure had gone into the water..."

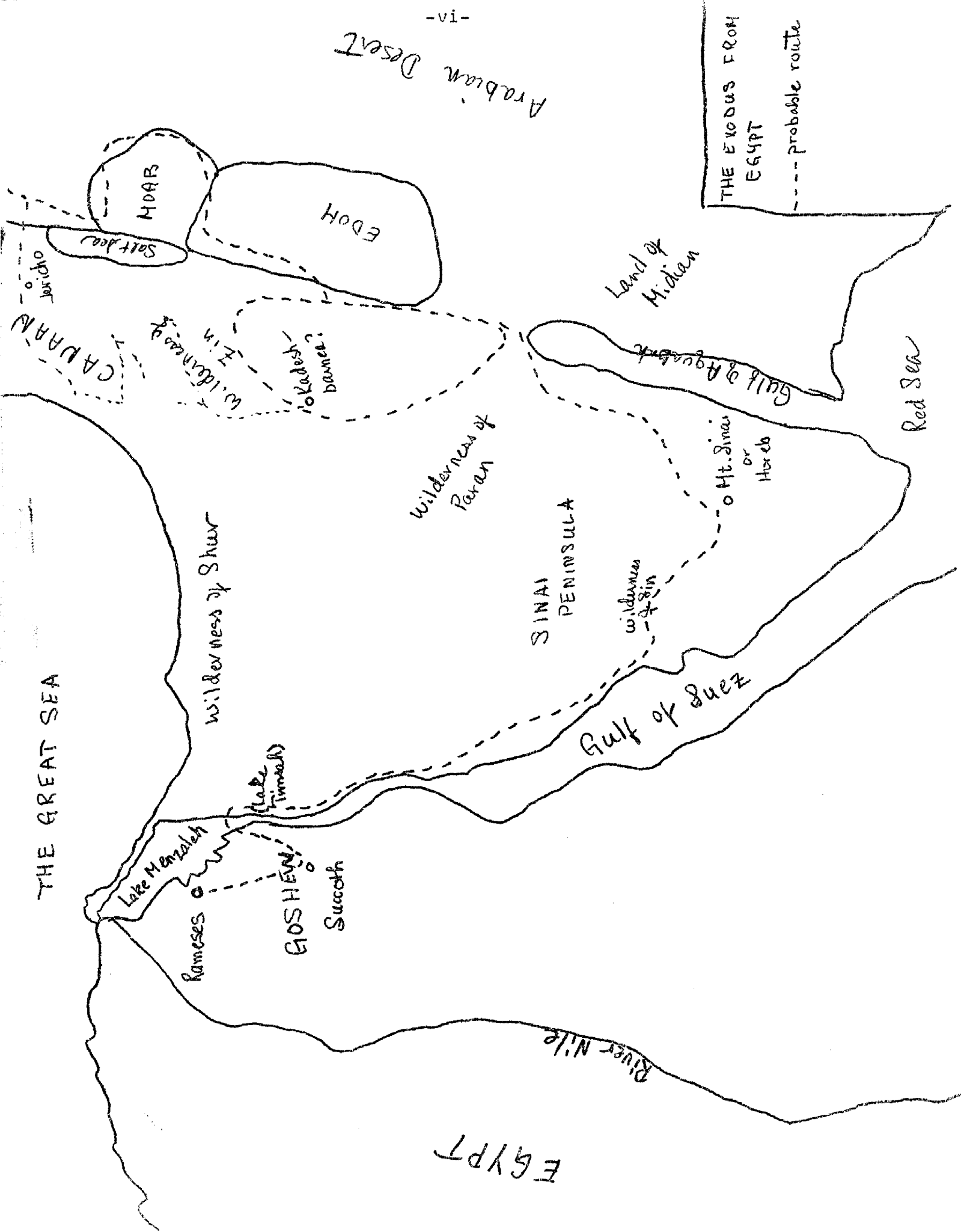
"Whatever I had I laded upon her....
Whatever I had of all the living beings I laded upon her.
All my family and kin I made go aboard the ship.
The beasts of the field, the wild creatures of the field,
All the craftsmen I made go aboard..."

"I watched the appearance of the weather.
The weather was awesome to behold.
I boarded the ship and battened up the entrance.
To batten down the whole ship, to Puzur-Amurri, the boatman,
I handed over the structure together with its contents..."

"Six days and six nights
Blows the flood wind, as the south-storm sweeps the land.
When the seventh day arrived,
The flood-carrying south-storm subsided in the battle,
Which it had fought like an army.
The sea grew quiet, the tempest was still, the flood ceased.
I looked as the weather: stillness had set in,
And all of mankind had returned to clay.
The landscape was as level as a flat roof.
I opened a hatch, and light fell upon my face.
Bowing low, I sat and wept,
Tears running down on my face.
I looked about for coast lines in the expanse of the sea:
In each of fourteen regions
There emerged a region-mountain.
On Mount Nisir the ship came to a halt.
Mount Nisir held the ship fast, allowing no motion.
On day, a second day, Mount Nisir held the ship fast, allowing no
motion..." (and so until the 7th day)

"When the seventh day arrived,
I sent forth and set free a dove.
The dove went forth, but came back;
Since no resting-place for it was visible, she turned round.
Then I sent forth and set free a swallow.
The swallow went forth, but came back;
Since no resting-place for it was visible, she turned round.
Then I sent forth and set free a raven.
The raven went forth and, seeing that the waters had diminished,
He eats, circles, caws, and turns not round.
Then I let out all to the four winds and offered a sacrifice..."

"Hitherto Utnapishtim has been but human.
Henceforth Utnapishtim and his wife shall be like unto us gods..."



C. T.
Miss Shaw
Sept. 30, 1966

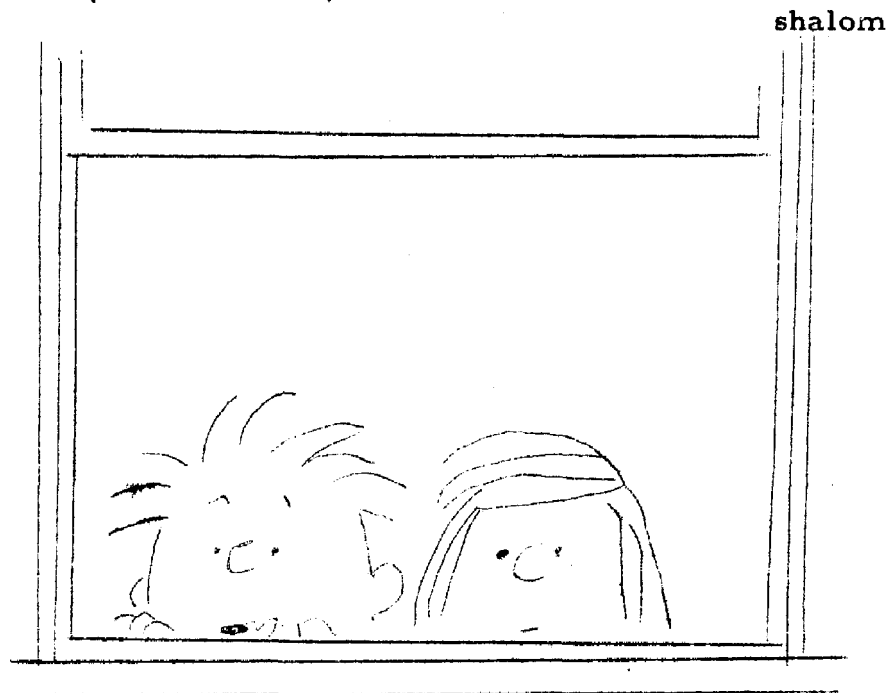
ASSIGNMENT FOR WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5:

Referring again to the Oxford Bible Atlas, fill in the map of Canaan.

You are to include these cities:

Damascus, Shechem, Bethel, Ai, Jericho, Gibeon,
Jerusalem, and Hebron.

When that is completed, you are to write in the names of the
bodies of water (there are four).



"I was under the impression that when you looked out
the window of Room 31, you'd be able to see Canaan..."

100
100
100

The Negeb

EDOM

MOAB

MORITES

AMMON

BASHAN

THE GREAT SEA

The Land of Canaan
Abraham to Moses

N

SYRIA

to Hagar

-viii-

A classroom assignment: working in two groups, place these people and events in their correct order. Be able to defend your choice.

-ix-

Miss Shaw

10/21/66

1st Babylonian Dynasty

Habitat

Hammurabi

Haran

Isaac

7 years' famine

Sarah

Rachel

Hyksos in Palestine

Leah

Jacob gets the "goods"

Elohim

Abraham

Israel

Mesopotamia

Yohweh

Benjamin

01/1/67



--X--

Homework review assignment: Ancient Near Eastern Backgrounds
and Genesis.

O.T.
Miss Shaw
October 21, 1966

Assignment for Wednesday, October 26, 1966:

I. Write one or two sentences about each of the following names:

1. Pentateuch
2. Torah
3. Four literary strands in the Pentateuch
4. Esau
5. Oral tradition
6. Gilgamesh Epic
7. Bethel
8. Ishmael
9. Rachel
10. Rebekah

II. Write a paragraph or two describing the importance of the following events in Israel's history:

1. Mari Letters
2. Abraham's covenant with Yahweh
3. Jacob's blessing from his father
4. Isaac's "sacrifice"
5. Joseph's appointment as Secretary of Agriculture

III. Define "mytho-poetic thought" in your own words

IV. Answer the following questions:

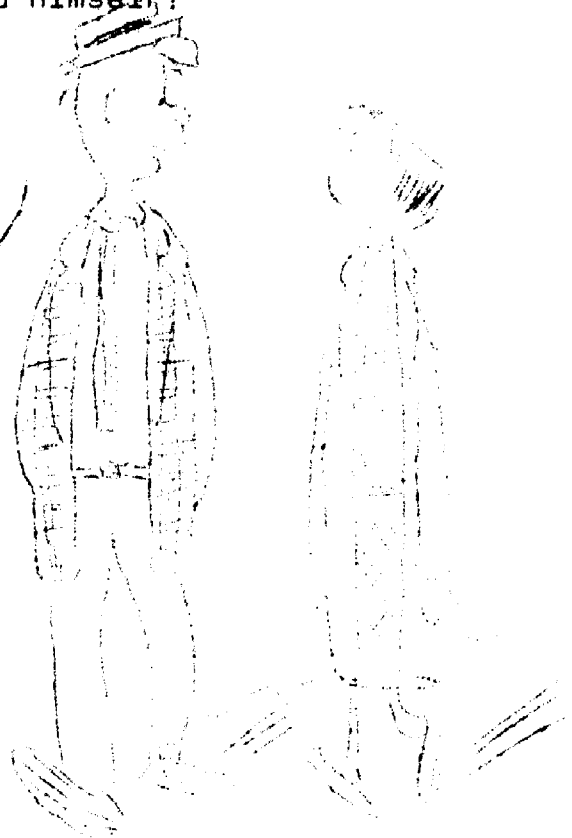
1. How has God revealed himself?
2. Where has God revealed himself?
3. As whom has God revealed himself?

V. Write one or two paragraphs on:

1. Mesopotamian religion
2. Egyptian religion
3. Canaanite religion

" "In the beginning God...".....

How's that for being able to
quote the O.T.?"



Term test: Ancient Near Eastern Backgrounds and Genesis

O.T.
Miss Shaw
10/28/66

A. Match column A with column B

-8-

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| _____ Habiru | 1. Hammurabi |
| _____ 1st Babylonian Dynasty | 2. Shechem |
| _____ Abraham's wife | 3. Esau |
| _____ Jacob's name changed to: | 4. Hebrews |
| _____ Joseph was associated with: | 5. God |
| _____ "is an hairy man" | 6. J Document |
| _____ "In the beginning____" | 7. Israel |
| _____ Gilgamesh Epic | 8. Sarah |
| _____ Yahwist writer | 9. Bethel |
| _____ "House of God" | 10. Genesis 6-8 |
| | 11. Jacob |
| | 12. Creation stories |

B. Fill in the "time line" (5 minutes)

1. Mark A.D.
2. Mark B.C.
3. 3d Dynasty of Ur
4. Mari Letters (about the Habiru)
5. Abraham's journey from Mesopotamia to Canaan.

C. How would you describe mytho-poetic thought to a ninth grade student? Does it have anything to do with what we have been studying? (10 Minutes)

D. Using examples from Abraham's call (Gen. 12:1-3), describe the relationship between Yahweh and Abraham, i.e. what was Abraham's reaction to Yahweh's command? Did Abraham come through, or was he a failure? Why do you think Abraham is one of Israel's patriarchs? (10 minutes)

E. Briefly summarize the main events in the life of one of the following as it is presented in Genesis?

- a. Abraham
- b. Jacob
- c. Joseph

(Homework assignment)

1. Read I Samuel 9 and 10
2. Read Chronicles, Issue 16. Then, answer the following questions using this paper for your answers.
 1. Who objected to Samuel's naming of Saul as King?
What was the name of the objector's grandfather?
 2. Where is the Ark of the Covenant kept?
Who had possession of the Ark previous to
this issue?
 3. Why did the Philistines object to the coronation of Saul
as King of the tribes of Israel?
4. What did Saul do about the size of his army?
Who did Saul appoint as Commander-in-Chief?
5. In both accounts (Pro-monarchical and Anti-monarchical)
the anointing of Saul as King of Israel takes place in
Benjamin. Why?
6. Which foreign country presents the largest threat to
Israel?
Why has this nation grown so wealthy?
7. The idea of monarchy (Circle as many as apply):
 - a. is a new one
 - b. was used in Babylonia
 - c. was not well received by the Benjaminites
 - d. was first suggested by Gideon
 - e. was successful under Abimelech (Avimalach)
 - f. was one way of uniting forces against the Philistine
menace.
8. Why have Israelite men avoided Philistine women?
9. What do you know about Jephthah's daughter?

1. Mark your Bible for the use of class, using different color pens or pencils (in the margins). Be sure that you mark at the beginning of 1 Sam. which color stands for the Pro-monarchy and which for the Anti-monarchy.

Pro-monarchy, Saul, early

1 Sam. 9:11 - 10:16

1 Sam. 11

1 Sam. 13:3b, 4b-15

Anti-monarchy, Samuel, late

1 Sam. 7:3 - 8:22

1 Sam. 10:17-27

1 Sam. 12

1 Sam. 15

2. Read 1 Sam. 16; 17:1-11, 32-56; 18:1-16; 19; 20.
When you have finished the reading, fill in the blanks on this sheet with the information you found in the text.

1 Sam. 16. YHWH sends Saul to see _____, from the city of _____. There, he is told by YHWH, he will _____ a kind. After having seen Jesse's sons _____ and _____ he inquires about the other son _____ who is keeping the sheep. _____ tells Samuel that David is the one he has chosen as king of Israel; _____ anoints _____ after which YHWH's _____ depends upon him.

The meeting of Saul and David takes place under strange _____ of YHWH circumstances. We read that the _____/has left Saul, causing him to fall into fits of depression. He calls for a _____ and David is sent. David enters Saul's service as his _____ and Saul _____ him greatly.

1 Sam. 17:1-11, 32-56. This story is a compilation of the two sources, Pro-monarchy and Anti-monarchy. These scenes is on the battle ground, and the two warring parties are _____ and _____. The chief warrior for the _____ is Goliath, a man of great strength and stature. _____ volunteers his services to fight Goliath, but Saul is skeptical because David is only a _____. In vs. 32-40, Saul knows who _____ is, whereas in v. 55-58, Saul asks _____ whose son David is.

I Sam. 18:1-15. This chapter is also a compilation of the two sources. We are introduced here to Jonathan, Saul's son. A close friendship has developed, we are told, between _____ and _____. David, the successful warrior returns home, and the people meet him and Saul with this song: "_____ has slain his thousands, and _____ his thousands." This marks the beginning of a break in the relationship between Saul and David. Saul attempts to _____ David because he knows that YHWH goes with him.

I Sam. 19. The internal situation between Saul and David has grown increasingly difficult. _____ tells David that _____ seeks to kill him. In the next scene, _____ promises Jonathan that he will not kill _____, but he does not keep his word. _____ escapes with Michael's help, David's _____ and goes to Samuel. Saul goes after David, and meeting up with Samuel and a band of prophets, _____ also prophesies.

I Sam. 20. This chapter gives us the story of the final break between Saul and David. Unconscious of his sin against Saul, David asks _____ about it; the latter appears to know nothing about the strife between David and Saul. It is the time of the new moon festival when all members of a _____ traditionally eat meals together. Jonathan and David construct a plan, whereby, if Saul is angry over David's absence, he will signal David by saying _____. If all is well between Saul and David, the signal will be these words, _____. Saul's anger, however, is kindled against both _____ and _____. So that after the signal is given to David, he _____

Assignment for Wednesday, January 18, 1967

O. O.T.
Miss Shaw

1. Put the following names in chronological order, and tell where they are found in the O.T. (i.e. in which book):

Deborah, Jacob, Moses, Saul, Abraham, Samuel, Aaron,
David, Joshua, Samson

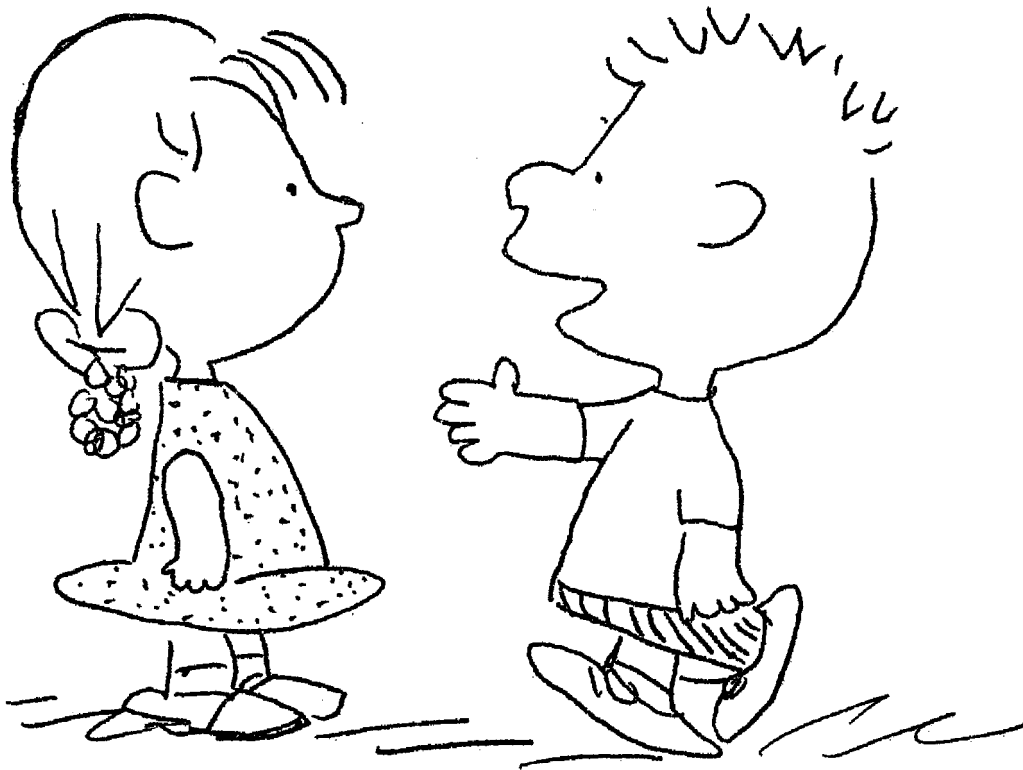
2. Write a few sentences telling something about these places, and their importance for the history of Israel:

Shechem, Shiloh, Sinai, Canaan, Egypt

3. Trace Israel's form of government (political organization) from the time of Abraham to Saul. You will want to use the following terms: slavery, nomad, tribe, king, judge.

4. Discuss the significance of monarchy for Israel. You will want to say something here about the Philistines, the function of Israel's judges, and the Pro and Anti-monarchy theories.

5. Read Deut. 26:5-9 in an RSV Bible. Why did the people of Israel regard this as their "creed"?



"Hi! I've just been told that I'm one of God's children...
Who are you?"

Review sheet for Examination: Jan. 21, 1967 (10-1 p.m.)

O.T.
Miss Shaw

Torah
Pentateuch
J,E,D,P documents
Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph
Canaanites
*Canaan
Hittite Suzerainty treaty
Decalogue
*Bethel
*Shiloh
*Shechem
Hebron
Moses
*Sea of Reeds
*Sinai
*Horeb
YHWH
Elohim
*Exodus from Egypt
Rameses II
cult
Ark of Covenant
Mosaic faith
Calling of a prophet
Conquest of Canaan
Joshua
Judges: Deborah
Jephthah
Gideon
Samson
*Jericho
Tribal organization
*Midian
*Ammon
*Philistia
"word of YHWH"
"spirit of the LORD"
Pro-monarchy
Anti-monarchy
Samuel
Saul
Eli
David
Jonathan
Prophet
Seer
Jesse
*Bethlehem

* - be able to find these
on a map

Scripture passages: **

Deut 26:5-9
Joshua 24
Gen 12: 1-3
Psalm 105
Exodus 15: 1-18
Exodus 15:21
I Sam. 18:7
Exodus 20:3

** These passages are familiar to all of you, with the exception of Ps. 105. Re-read them, and see if you know what they are talking about. There will be a question on the exam about a few of these passages. You will not have to identify them but you will be asked to comment on their significance in Israel's history.



"But you don't understand...
I'm like Samson.....
Take away these sideburns, man,
and I'm nothing!"

READ EACH QUESTION CAREFULLY!!!!

Part I. Match column A with column B

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| _____ Israel's patriarchs | 1. Bethel |
| _____ He worked for Eli | 2. Levites |
| _____ He had 12 sons | 3. Samuel |
| _____ Was based on the Hittite suzerainty treaties | 4. Covenant |
| _____ An agreement between YHWH and the Israelites | 5. Jacob |
| _____ Gen., Ex., Lev., Num., Deut. | 6. Torah |
| _____ name for God in E document | 7. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob |
| _____ was LORD of Israel's history | 8. Elohim |
| _____ Led his people out of Egypt | 9. Moses |
| _____ Was Pharaoh at time of Israelite slavery | 10. Gen. 12:1-3 |
| _____ Covenant renewed there | 11. Raamses II |
| _____ Israel's priests | 12. Shechem |
| _____ "house of God" | 13. Sarah |
| _____ captured city of Jericho | 14. Ammonites |
| _____ was fulfilled when Israel captured Canaan | 15. YHWH |
| | 16. Shiloh |
| | 17. Decalogue |
| | 18. Joshua |
| | 19. Deborah |
| | 20. Joseph |

Part II. Choose the statement which most clearly completes the sentence; CIRCLE your choice.

1. The O.T. is:
- a. just like a history book
 - b. a list of events which have no archeological evidence
 - c. a collection of books written at different times by different peoples

Name _____

Old Testament Examination, p. 2

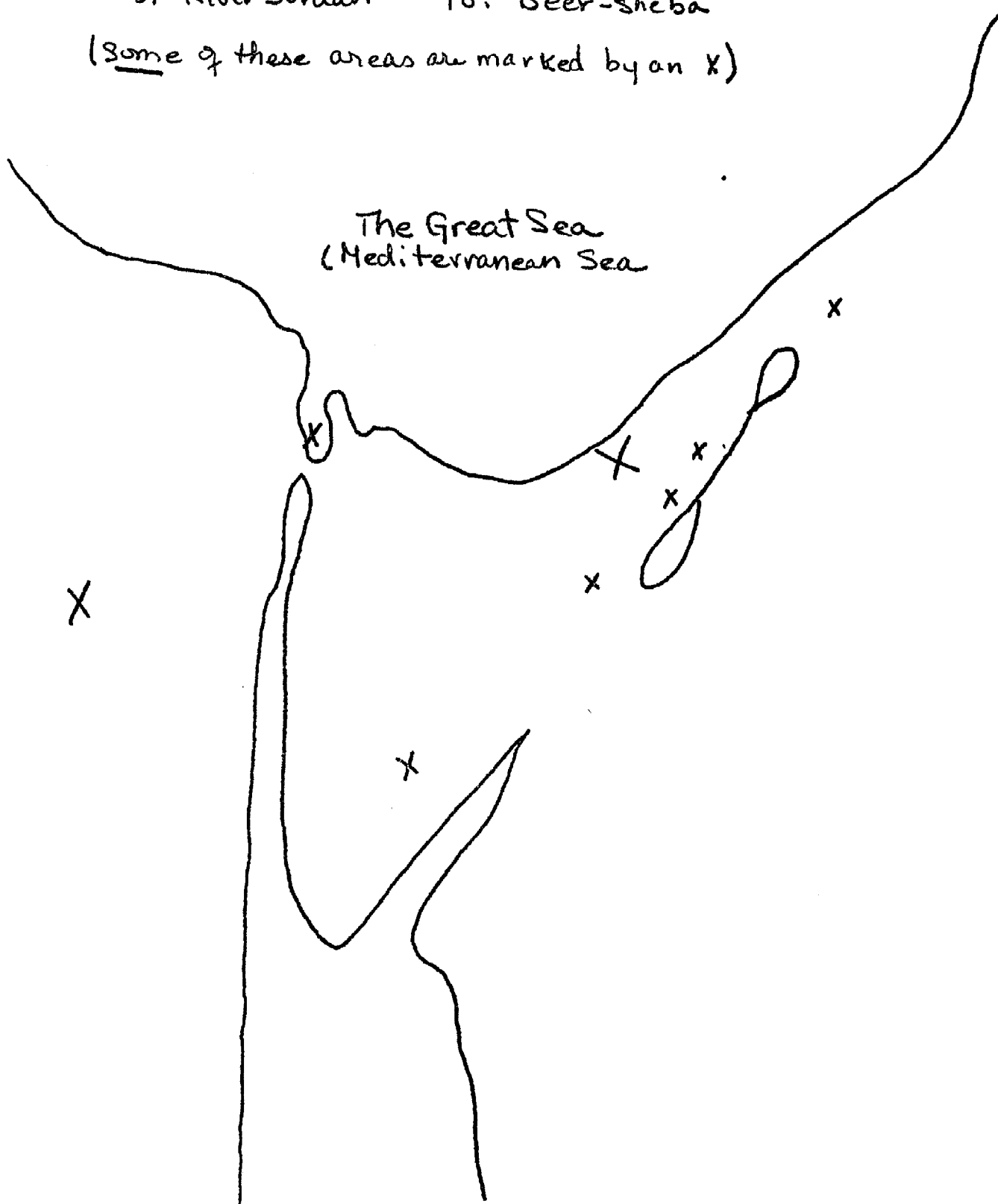
2. J,E,D,P:
 - a. are initials for the four names of God
 - b. are initials for the four different strands of thought in the Pentateuch
 - c. are initials for the four men who wrote the Old Testament
3. YHWH
 - a. means Elohim
 - b. is the name used for God by the J document
 - c. was Abraham's father
4. Philistia:
 - a. Saul was friendly with this country
 - b. threatened Israel during period of the Judges
 - c. captured the Ark of the Covenant from Shiloh
5. Patriarchs
 - a. led Israel out of Egypt
 - b. are known as Israel's fathers
 - c. David and Jonathan
6. The Israelites believed the conquest of Canaan was due to:
 - a. the quality of their weapons
 - b. the leadership of Joshua
 - c. YHWH's spirit which was with them
7. The most important fact about Abraham was that:
 - a. he was a patriarch
 - b. he was the first man chosen by YHWH to lead a people who responded to YHWH's call
 - c. he has a son, Isaac
8. Saul's loss of power and self-respect was due to:
 - a. his failing spiritual (charismatic) leadership
 - b. David's musical talent
 - c. Jonathan's friendship with David
9. Samuel:
 - a. was Jonathan's father
 - b. received the "word of the LORD" at his call
 - c. was one of Israel's judges
10. Decalogue:
 - a. means ten books
 - b. is another name for the Torah
 - c. was based on the form of the Hittite suzerainty treaties

Part III. Map identification: see map.

Locate these areas:

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Land of Canaan | 6. Jerusalem |
| 2. Philistia | 7. Shechem |
| 3. Sinai | 8. Sea of Reeds |
| 4. Egypt | 9. Dan |
| 5. River Jordan | 10. Beer-sheba |

(Some of these areas are marked by an X)



Name _____

Old Testament Examination, p. 4

Part IV. Choose ONE man from the following list and briefly summarize the events of his life. You may want to refer to your Old Testament to check the facts.

Moses
Joshua
Samuel
Saul

(BE SURE YOUR NAME IS ON THE
PAPER YOU USE)

PART V. Scripture Identification

1. Read Psalm 105 and discuss its importance in Israel's history.
2. Choose ONE scripture passage from the following list and discuss its importance in Israel's history:
 - a. Joshua 24
 - b. Exodus 20:3
 - c. I Sam. 18:7

Part VI.

We have travelled a long way with YHWH's chosen people: from a nomadic existence to slavery in Egypt, on through the wilderness when faith was dim to the land of Canaan. This land of "milk and honey" was "promised land" -- promised to the descendants of Abraham. Put yourself in the place of an Israelite living in that land, and write a letter which will be read to your grandchildren, telling them all the events of your people's history which you feel are important for them to remember. It will help your answer if you will support your story with the important passages from the Old Testament which describe those events.

Period of the Kings: 1000-587 B.C.

United Monarchy: DAVID 1000-931

SOLOMON 961-922

Divided Monarchy: 922-587 (cross lines mark changes of dynasties)

ISRAEL -- North -- Samaria

<u>Ruler</u>		<u>Prophet</u>
JEREBEAM I (922-901)	I Kings 12:1 - 14:20	
Nadab (901-900)	I Kings 15:25-32	
Baasha (900-877)	I Kings 15:33 - 16:7	
Elah (877-876)	I Kings 16:8-14	
Zimri (876)	I Kings 16:15-20	
OMRI (876-860)	I Kings 16:21-28	
AHAB (869-850)	I Kings 16:29-34; 20:1-43; 22:1-40.	(Battle of Karkar, 853 JUDAH & Israel against Assyria)
Ahaziah (850-849)	II Kings 1:1-18	ELIJAH-IK.17 - 19:18; 21:1-29; IIK.1:1-2:12.
Jehoram (849-842)	II Kings 3:1-3	
JEHU (842-815)	II Kings 9:1-37	(841-Jehu pays tribute to Shalmaneser III, Assyria)
Jehoahaz (815-801)	II Kings 10:35	ELISHA-IK.19:19-21; IIK.2:1-25; 3:9-8:15; 9:1-37.
Joash (801-786)	II Kings 13:2-9, 22-25	
JEROBOAM II (786-746)	II Kings 14:23-29	AMOS
Zachariah (746-745)	II Kings 15:8-31	(Tiglath-Pileser III leads Assyria, 745-727)
Shallum (745)	II Kings 15:8-31	
Menahem (745-738)	II Kings 15:8-31	HOSEA
Pekahiah (738-737)	II Kings 15:8-31	
Pekah (737-732)	II Kings 15:8-31	
Hoshea (732-724)	II Kings 17:1-6	
FALL OF SAMARIA (722-721)	I Kings 17:7ff	(Sargon II, Assyria defeats Samaria)

-XXIV-

Date 7/21/01
Oliver Shaw

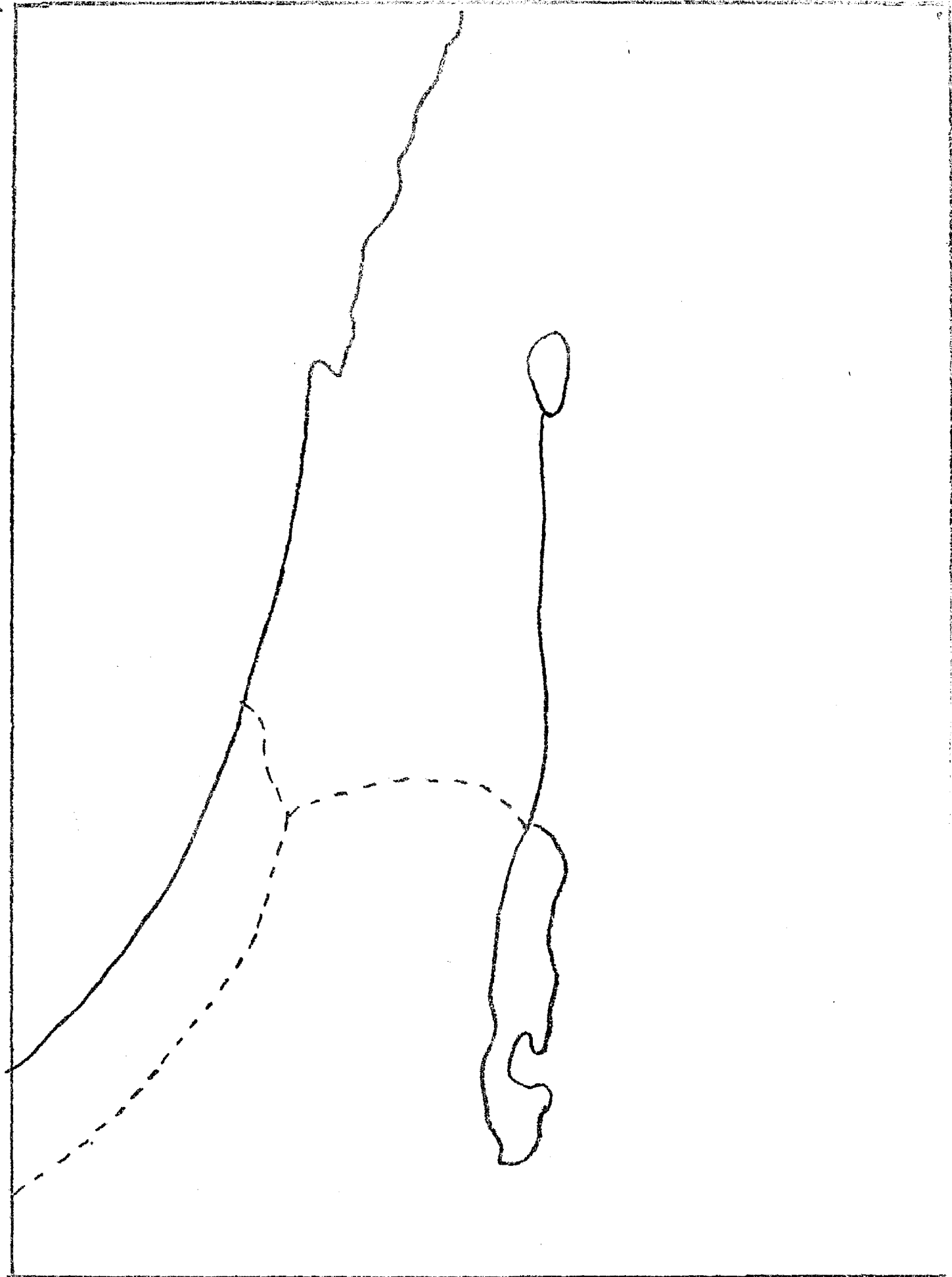
Period of the Kings: 1000-587 B.C.

United Monarchy: DAVID 1000-967
SOLOMON 961-922

Divided Monarchy: 922-587 (cross lines mark changes of dynasties)

JUDAH -- South -- Jerusalem		
Prophet		Ruler
	REHOBOAM (922-915)	I Kings 14:21-31
	Abijam (915-913)	I Kings 15:1-8
	ASA (913-873)	I Kings 15:9-24
	JEHOSHAPHAT (873-849)	I Kings 22:41-51
	Jehoram (or Joram) (849-842)	II Kings 8:16-24
	Ahaziah (842)	II Kings 8:25-28
	Athaliah (842-837)	II Kings 11:1-20
	Joash (or Jehoash) (837-800)	II Kings 13:10-25
	Amaziah (800-783)	II Kings 14:1-22
	UZZIAH (or Azariah) (783-742)	II Kings 15:1-17
	Jotham (regent and king) (750-735)	II Kings 15:3
	AHAZ (735-715)	II Kings 16:1-20
	HEZEKIAH (715-687)	II Kings 18:1 - 20:
	MANASSEH (687-642)	II Kings 21:1-18
	Amon (642-640)	II Kings 21:19-26
(Sennacherib invasion, 701, Assyria)	ISAIAH	
	MICAH	
(Deuteronomic Reform, 622-- IIK22-23 cf. Deut 12-26)		
	(Battle of Car-chemish, 605; Babylonia in power)	
(Exile:598-587)	JEREMIAH	
	EZEKIEL	
	JOSIAH (640-609)	II Kings 22:1 - 23:
	Jehoiashaz (609)	II Kings 23:31-35
	Jehoiakim (609-598)	II Kings 23:36 - 24
	Jehoiachin (598-597)	II Kings 24:8-17
	Zedekiah (597-587)	II Kings 24:18 - 25
	FALL OF JERUSALEM (587)	II Kings 25:8-21
Fall of Babylon to Persia-539		
Edict of Cyrus (Persia)-538; exiles return		
Haggai		
Zechariah	temple rebuilt c.520	
Ezra		
Nehemiah		

(Homework assignment: mark principle cities and each kingdom)
The Kingdoms of Israel and Judah (912-587), Oxford Bible Atlas, p. 69
-xxii-



Selected "libretto" for class lesson

"Elijah" Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

— first performance in England, 1846,

2/24/56
Miss Shaw

Elijah: As God the Lord of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

People: Help Lord! wilt Thou quite destroy us? The harvest now is over, the summer days are gone, and yet no power cometh to help us! Wilt then the Lord be no more God in Zion?

People: Lord! how Thine ear to our prayer! Zion spreadeth her hands for aid; and there is neither help nor comfort.

Obadiah: Ye people, rend your hearts, and not your garments, for your transgressions. Prophet Elijah hath sealed the heavens through the word of God. I therefore say to ye, forsake your idols, return to God; for He is slow to anger, and merciful, and kind and gracious, and repenteth Him of the evil.

Obadiah: If with all your hearts ye truly seek Me, ye shall ever surely find Me. He saith our God. Oh! that I knew where I might find Him, that I might even come before His presence.

People: Yet doth the Lord see it not: He mocketh at us; His curse hath fallen down upon us; His wrath will pursue us, till He destroy us!

For He, the Lord our God, He is a jealous God; and He visiteth all the fathers unto the children to the third and the fourth generation of them that hate Him. His mercies on thousands fall -- fall on all them that love Him, and keep His commandments.

~~Obadiah~~

Priests of Baal: Baal, we cry to thee; hear and answer us! Heed the sacrifice we offer! Baal, O hear us, and answer us! Hear us Baal! Hear, mighty god! Baal, O answer us! Baal, let thy flames fall and consume the fool! Baal, O hear us!

*** (insert above) Blessed are the men who fear Him: they ever walk in the way of peace. Through darkness riseth light to the upright. He is gracious, compassionate: He is righteous.

Elijah: Draw near, all ye people: come to me! Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, this day let it be known that Thou art God; and that I am Thy Servant. O show to all this people that I have done these things according to Thy will. O hear me, Lord, and answer me; and show this people that Thou art Lord God; and let their hearts again be turned!

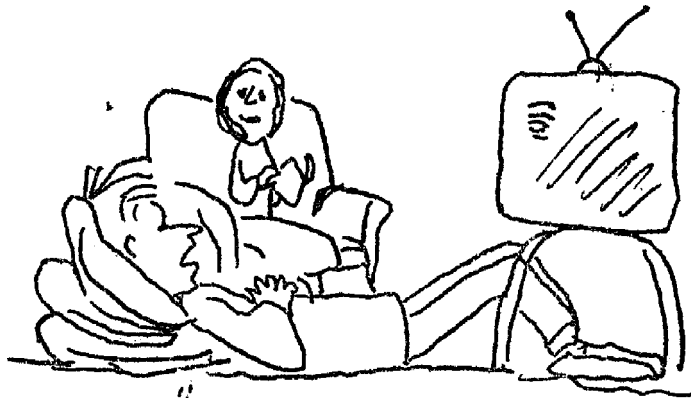
People: The fire descends from Heaven; the flames consume His offering. Before Him upon your faces fall! The Lord is God: O Israel, heart! Our God is the Lord; and we will have no other gods before the Lord!

People: Thanks be to God! He loveth the solitary land! The waters gather, they come along; they are lifting their voices! The stormy billows are high, their fury is mighty. But the Lord is above them, and Almighty!

O.T.
March 1, 1967
Miss Shaw

The Prophet Amos

1. Read Amos, ch. 1 and 2.
 - a. To which nations did Amos speak?
 - b. List the transgressions of both Judah and Israel
2. Read Amos, chs. 3 and 4.
 - a. Why was Israel put under God's judgment?
3. Read Amos 5:18-20
 - a. How does the prophet describe "the day of the LORD?"
4. Read Amos 7:1-9, 8:1-3, 9:1-4. These sections describe Amos' five visions. What are the visions, and what does Amos say about Israel in these visions?
5. Memorize Amos 5: 14 and 15.



"I used to be able to memorize scripture, but you know how it is as you get older.....Your mind just doesn't work as well!"

Corbett, J.E., The Prophets on Main Street, Richmond: John Knox Press, 1965.

Amos --- Prophet of Justice in an Atomic Age

Thus says the Lord:

For three transgressions of Germany, and for four, I will not turn it back;

for you have destroyed millions in your gas chambers, and persecuted my people without pity.

Therefore a wall shall divide you, and foreign nations shall occupy you.

For three transgressions of Japan, and for four, I will not turn it back,

because you ravaged your neighbors, and oppressed the weak through conquest.

So I will make of you an armed camp and a naval base, though in your constitution you outlaw war.

For three transgressions of Russia, and for four, I will not turn it back,

for you have kept your people in ignorance by censorship, and falsely convinced them of their prosperity.

You have rattled your missiles above the noisy proclamations of your peaceful intentions, and tempered with the freedom of friendly nations.

So I will tip your hand to your opponents, and saddle your people with the heavy burden of armaments.

For three transgressions of America and for four, I will not turn it back,

because you have dropped atom bombs without remorse upon open cities, and stockpiled H-bombs ad infinitum.

So I will make other nations fear your power and envy your wealth. Your doom is assured, your demise is at hand.

For I hear your songs of self-praise;

I listen also to your criticism of others.

But though I remove the wax from my straining ears, I cannot hear your voice raised in self-judgment and repentance.

There is wailing in the streets of Washington, and confusion on the expressways of Chicago.

There is atomic dust over the city of Los Angeles; no smog lay as heavy or as long.

The cries of children in New York City are heard above the siren's scream.

For you trusted in the makers of atom bombs, but not in the Maker of the atom.

.....

I hate your new church buildings,

I take no great pleasure in your rising membership rolls.

The tinkle of your treasures gives me an earache!

Take away from my sight your veneer of piety.

To your boasts of being a Christian nation I will not listen.

But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

.....

1:3-2:8

5:21-24

Corbett, p. 2

Woe to you unless you search after my ways
and follow after my commandments!
Your grandfathers found America a haven for the many,
but you have made it a refuge for the few.
Your poetry at the gate says,
"Give me your tired, your poor,
your huddled masses yearning to be free."
But your law at the gate says,
"Your nationality is wrong,
your politics is wrong,
your color is wrong,
you were born in the wrong place --
stay home!"

Woe unto you, hypocrites! who tolerate TV beer commercials to
sponsor your national sport,
yet you are puzzled when teen-agers turn for enjoyment from
baseball to beer-drinking.
You clutter your highways with taverns
though when alcohol and gasoline are mixed,
too often they turn to blood.
You piously proclaim, "What's the harm in a little drink?"
Yet you show only disgust at the skid-row plight
of millions of dead-end alcoholics.

7.14-15 I am not a called preacher who must depend for his security upon
those who hire him;
who must please the people of the pews,
but not necessarily the God of the heavens.
My calling is of God, for I am only a poor shepherd and the
pruner of fruit trees.
But the Lord took me from following the flock, and the Lord
said to me, "Go, prophesy to my people of America."

pp. 27-30.

O.T.
Miss Shaw

Assignment for Friday, March 10.

Read Hosea 1, 2, 3, 4: 1-10, 6: 1-6, 11: 1-11, 14.

1. Who was Hosea - where did he live?
2. Who was Gomer?
3. What is the parallel between Hosea and Gomer and Yahweh and Israel?
Describe their relationship in detail and give the scriptural reference to support your answer.
4. How has Israel sinned? What does Hosea tell the Israelites to do? Use scripture to support your answer.

P.L.
March 13, 67
Miss Shaw

Assignment for Wednesday, March 15, 1967

I. Write a few sentences about each of the following:

1. Absalom
2. Hiram, King of Tyre
3. Nathan
4. Bathsheba
5. Queen of Sheba
6. Solomon's Temple
7. "What portion have we in David?
We have no inheritance in the son of Jesse" (I Kings 2:26)
8. Bethel, Dan and Peniel
9. Mount Carmel
10. Naboth's vineyard

II. Compare David's reign as King of Israel with Solomon's reign.

III. What do you think was the significance of the Divided Monarchy for the history of Israel? You will want to refer to Israel's previous forms of government in your answer.

IV. List some of the important events of the reigns of these kings of Israel: Jereboam I, Omri, Ahab, Jehu and Jereboam II.

V. Why do you think Elijah was a prophet? Discuss the meaning of prophecy.

VI. Compare and contrast the prophecies of Amos and Hosea. What was the historical situation in which these prophets were involved? To whom was their prophecy directed?

VII. Discuss the meaning of these passages:

I Kings 18:41.
Amos 2:6
Amos 3:2
Hosea 1:9
Hosea 4:1
Hosea 11:1

III. Construct a time line including these events and people:

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------|
| 1. Divided Monarchy | 5. Jereboam II |
| 2. David's reign | 6. Amos |
| 3. Elijah | 7. Hosea |
| 4. Jereboam I | 8. Omri |
| | 9. Ahab |
| | 10. Jehu |

Term Test

O.T.
Miss Shaw
March 15, 1967

In the light of our discussion of prophets and prophetism, you are to write an essay on this question:

You are presently holding a political office to which you have been elected by your constituency. Some critical issues have come up for which you have no answers. You think about them for a while and finally you decide that what is needed is the aid of a prophet.

How would you describe, to prospective applicants, the job of a prophet? What kind of a person do you want? What background and experience should he or she have? What authority should this person have to fulfill his office as your ~~see~~ prophet?

You may, if you like, construct a hypothetical situation in which you are involved and write what you think your prophet might say.

You may also criticize this question, in the light of what you know about prophets, their function and calling.

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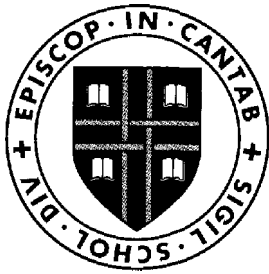
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